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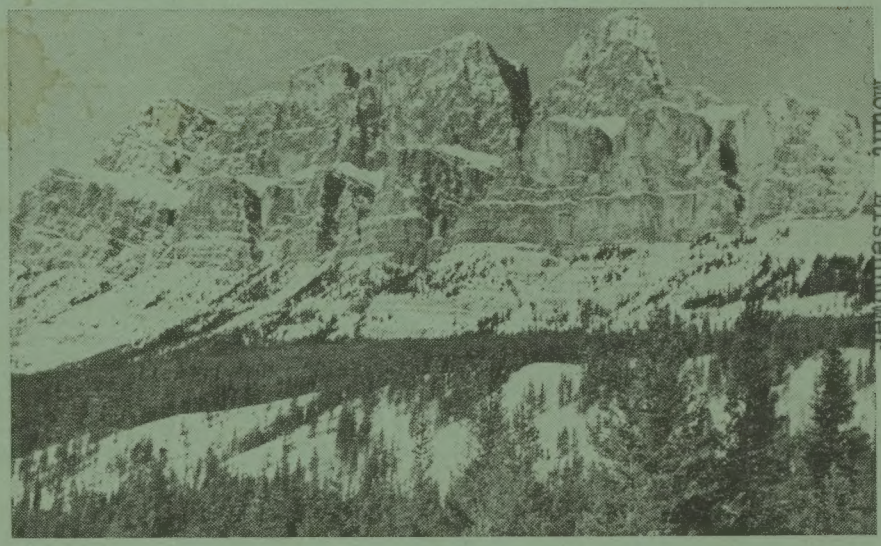
THREE INTERESTING STORIES

featuring

Glorified Wilderness

A Descriptive Narrative of

BANFF NATIONAL PARK



Mount Eisenhower

and the Novelette—

★ Path of Earthly Stars

and a Short Story—

★ Seaward Deluge

by BEATRICE BOLES LIDDLE

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Glorified Wilderness

"Why can't people leave me alone—just leave me by myself, sometimes!" So sighed Judith Grey.

When she had received the official notice, telling her that Eric would never return, after he had been missing for many, long months, Judith's friends and family could not show sympathy enough. But, while they hovered about her continually, her frayed nerves shouted for the opportunity to be alone, that she might grieve her heart out for her lost love if she wished. She believed that the opportunity to weep unrestrainedly might serve to lift some of the unbearable load from heart and mind.

How she wished that they had married and taken their few weeks of happiness!

Luckily, Judith's sympathetic employer, noticing the ravages that three days of repressed grief had made—for she grew noticeably pale and nervous—suggested that she take a month's leave of absence in lieu of her forthcoming vacation.

The old friend of the family, Dr. Munroe, talked to her like a "Dutch Uncle", giving her many reasons, practical and psychological, why she must not brood. His eye-glasses gleamed over kindly blue eyes, as he shook his head to emphasize, "And you must have a change, my dear! You'll have to take a trip!"

Judith gratefully agreed and decided to go to Banff Resort in the Canadian Rockies for the present, as the fine summer weather had begun. She smilingly rejected the offers of all friends and relatives who offered to accompany her.

Judith kissed her father and mother good-bye, tenderly, at the station and said, "Don't look so worried, darlings! To be alone for a time, is just what I need and I *know* I'll soon feel better!" Both looked at her with some doubt, but smiled fondly.

Wiping his eye-glasses, her father said, "Well—have a good try, my dear!"

Her mother said, anxiously, "I do hope you're right, dear!"

The train trip from Calgary to Banff Resort, a distance of only eighty-five miles, was uneventful. Gazing almost steadily out of the window, Judith had her thoughts for company, for she and Eric had

taken this same trip together. But the grandeur of the mountain scenery drew her attention a great part of the time. A railroad employee summoned the obesrvation of passengers at frequent intervals to some of the more spectacular mountain peaks, by calling their names, suitably picturesque—"Three Sisters Peaks", "Cascade Mountain", "Mount Lougheed", "Mount Rundle," "Mount Norquay," and other exciting-sounding and distinctive titles, so fitting to the majestic masses of rock and earth and evergreens so liberally clad with gleaming ice and snow, eternally.

Mount Norquay brought back memories. Judith thought of the spills she had taken at Mount Norquay Ski Lodge, with Eric to cheer her on after every mishap. Fairyland winter Banff! Lovelier perhaps, in appearance, than summer Banff—but no—perfection cannot be improved upon. Winter Banff was like—a matchlessly beautiful woman, seeming more fair in gleaming evening dress. Judith was glad they had taken in Banff's winter carnival, too.

Judith was surprised when she reached her destination, her thoughts and the scenery had been so engrossing. But, luckily, almost at once, she discovered a comfortable suite of rooms, just vacated. Her loquatious land-lady showed her all its features. She paid tribute to Judith's blye-eyed and dark auburn tressed beauty with admiring glances. As she went out she said, "Now, just speak up if you need anything more, dearie!"

So, at last Judith was free to grieve her heart out when she felt the urge.

But, with the change of scenery, mysteriously, the impulse became less pressing!

Mountain climbing, even in solitude, acted as a balm to her sorrow. Besides, Eric seemed with her in spirit. She could not be subconsciously admire the breath-taking scenery; the many mountain peaks against the bright blue sky, or partially obscured by ragged, fleecy clouds. The majesty of the evergreen covered slopes and the superb beauty of the immense canyons, enhanced by the lovely silver ribbon, which she recognized as the Bow River, twisting far below, took her mind off her personal sorrows. They seemed mundate trivialities when looking upon God's majestic immensities.

So, on Judith's first day in Banff, she found herself standing pensively on a lofty, rugged cliff. Eric had so loved this spot! A stone hewn face, fantastically moulded by nature, seemed eternally to survey the tumbling glacial river, far below, in Sundance Canyon. Ages ago, she thought, those unwinking eyes were charmed and fascinated by the scene and held in hypnotized wonder, never to waver.

Standing, with her hair blowing in the light breeze, with only this motionless and rugged individual for company, Judith's "aloneness"

seemed accentuated. But, since her solitude was self-imposed, she was not, as yet, at all lonely. She felt she had acquired a philosophy in life, quite unusual in one of twenty years.

She was relieved, that, here by herself, she need not fuss with her hair, experimenting with new modes. Instead, she twisted it back, simply, but providing a classic touch, or, at other times, she let her dark auburn curls blow free. Sometimes, she covered them with a gracefully knotted silken kerchief of gay red or blue hue. These unstudied hair styles only added to Judith's beauty.

She was very comfortable in hiking sport togs, tossed on so carelessly each day, and they became her clean-limbed form to perfection.

Judith was a trifle annoyed to find how often a good-looking and charming army officer with refractory dark hair, seemed to be going her way. After asking her for directions one day, he introduced himself as Stanley Woods, saying he was a citizen of that "one horse government town". The gleam in his eye belied his disparaging words and revealed his pride in his "home town". He inquired Judith's name, then struck up a conversation and joined her frequently after that. He explained that his own vocation was that of electrical engineering. He remarked gayly that he was "totally unmarried and entirely without encumbrances", and he talked about whales, whipoorwills, wigwams and whatnot. Ordinarily, Judith would have considered his conversation entertaining, but at this time it slightly jarred her high-strung nerves.

She at last felt obliged to tell Stan Woods, with difficult diplomacy' that she had come to Banff for the purpose of finding solitude that she might mourn a "recent bereavement". "I lost the man I was engaged to marry, in the war. He was missing for a very long time and now I know that he will never return," she explained, simply.

Stan was possessed of fine feeling for he answered, "Miss Grey— I'm so sorry I intruded! I noticed a shadow on your face and wondered if I might help. I'm not sure that you're wise to stay by yourself, but if I can do more by leaving you, I'll go my way!"

Judith answered with a few words of smiling thanks and a grateful hand pressure. But, continuing on, alone, she felt a little mean; and ungrateful to their family friend, Doctor Monroe! Just now, she had deliberately disregarded his advice. For, he had said, when talking to her before she had left for Banff, to obtain the change he had advised: "and don't brood, above all things, young lady! If a nice young man wants your company, let him take you out! Don't sit around and mope. One of my patients did that! She mourned a sweetheart for years, and grew prematurely old and soured and bitter. No—it is an unnatural and wrong thing to do, to embrace sorrow, always. The sooner you find someone else the better! Keep a sweet memory of the young man of course! But remember, time heals all hurts and brings new hopes and interests. Let it, my dear. I assure you, that is the course to take."

Judith had smiled, paying little attention. Though there must be some truth in the proffered, fatherly wisdom, she could not, at this point, imagine her heart would ever again feel other than weighted down with sorrow, But he did not wish her to grow morbid.

Two days later, Judith spent her time alone, as she and Eric had, one day, together, climbing Sulphur Mountain. She passed many others trudging up the narrow, twisting trail. Descending much later, along the beauty-filled, fragrantly treed trail, she rested and refreshed herself, bathing in the pool of the Upper Sulphur Springs.

Then, as she and Eric had done that day, she had supper in a quaint cafe, the walls of which were covered with beautiful photographs, enlarged, of the scenic wonders of Banff National Park. For the first time in days, she ate her meal with enjoyment, as the result of exercise. The lump in her throat, of late a fixture, had disappeared.

Returning to her apartment, Judith found a letter, forwarded to her, as pre-arranged for her mail. Her land-lady had slipped this one beneath her door.

Opening it, Judith was surprised to find it was from Larry Scott, a school chum of by-gone days, when she had lived in a distant, eastern city. She remembered him as the most handsome boy in town. But she had always taken him as a matter of course. Larry wrote in friendly terms, but also told Judith that a love having its beginning in chilhood, had survived the years! He said that, subconsicously, perhaps, he had hoped some miracle might happen; he hardly knew, himself. He had read of Eric's death and wished that he might help her in some way.

Judith felt a little critical of Larry and his hope for such miracles, but she realized he meant well. "He means to be comforting," she said, indulgently, aloud.

After reading his letter, Judith sat where she was for a time and recalled with a smile, her last sight of Larry. He had been playing tennis and was watched by a bevy of be-frilled and bemused girls who "oh-ed" and "ooh-ed" at his grace.

For three nights previous to receiving Larry's letter, Judith had been annoyed to find Stanley Woods in her dreams. She had hardly, consciously, thought of him, and, with some irritation, she wondered why she should dream of him. She hoped any more such insubstantial meanderings of her subconscious would be dispelled by the transpiring of news contained in Larry's letter.

For, half way through it, Larry had written, "I'm going through your city on the way to the coast. I want to help you if I can. I shall arrive in about a week and will be able to spend two days there." Judith listlessly tore up his letter, but as she dropped the fragments in a basket,

she realized that she must answer him at once, air-mail, telling him to continue to Banff, where she would be happy to see him.

By the time Larry arrived, Judith was feeling much less morbid and was unbelievably pleased when she beheld his handsome form descend from the coach. A possessive and pretty young lady stepped down with him, from whom he had to disentangle himself before he could join Judith. The attractive girl retained a hold on Larry's arm as she looked up at his face with smiling gaze. Larry hurriedly kissed her and, satisfied, she gave him a paper saying, "Here's my address. Be sure and write!" She waved gaily as she re-entered the train.

Judith was unable to restrain a little smile of amusement and Larry laughed uncomfortably as he greeted her with great warmth. He clasped her hands in his, tightly, and dismissed the little by-play with a few words, saying:

"I had to do that to get rid of the pretty pest. She's been tagging me the whole trip!"

Then, he said, with ardour, "But you, Judith! You are actually more beautiful than ever! I wouldn't have believed that possible!" He studied her as though enchanted.

"Perhaps," he said then, with wonderment, "Ir's that swanky outfit you're wearing. Anyway, those entrancing togs become you exceedingly well. But, what attire wouldn't! Take Judith; add any old clothes—and you still have beauty and charm!"

"Larry!" said Judith. "You have a way with the women! And you look very well yourself."

She elaborated no further, but her eyes took in his healthy, fair skin, blue eyes and tall young fairness. She felt that she now saw him for the first time with real appreciation. Previously, he had been mixed up in her mind with copybooks, desks and bicycles of school-room days. And—here before her stood a mature young man—and such a handsome one! No wonder the girl on the train had been smitten. Judith thought, "He's almost as tall as Stan Woods, but Stan has grey eyes and his skin is more bronzed." Then, annoyed at herself, she brushed Stan from her thoughts.

Preliminary greetings over, Judith and Larry went to a hotel lounge and talked.

Later, they took advantage of a bus tour to Lake Louise, thirty-five miles away. Enroute, two mountain goats gazed at them from rugged crags. They passed three moose wandering on the road with cattle-like tameness. Further on, they encountered about twenty elk which stood and looked with limpid dark eyes. They knew no fear in Banff National Park.

"There's Mount Eisenhower!" exclaimed Judith and Larry, together. Its turreted, rambling grandeur, formerly known as "Castle

Mountain" until named in honour of the famous general, rose majestically to their view. They agreed that it was outstandingly stately.

Soon after, they alighted at Lake Louise. Judith and Larry feasted their eyes upon the fascinating scene. They endeavoured to imprison the marvellous landscape within their cameras. They stood gazing enchantedly at this celebrated landscape—one of the manifestly beautiful spots of the world—with its mountains, everchanging, magically, in shading, yet always displaying its golds, purples, emeralds, blues—and all colours—and wearing a mantle of ice and snow, never more than partially discarded. The magnificent panorama, on which mere mortals always felt themselves privileged to gaze, obtaining, seemingly, a glimpse of Paradise—was duplicated by generous nature in the emerald-green waters of Lake Louise. Beholding the scene, the words spoken by Judith and Larry, were few. None could be found adequate to express the irresistible charm of this perfect picture.

Larry left it at "I didn't realize there were such scenes on earth!"

And Judith sighed almost with pain, saying, "How very beautiful!"

As they continued the tour up a precipitous road toward Moraine Lake, Judith's heart was in her mouth when other cars must pass their own on the narrow road, high, high up on the cliffs, among the mountain peaks. Perhaps the road only seemed narrow because of the element of danger present. Seeing her nervousness, Larry put his arm around her.

Reaching the beautiful emerald-green Moraine Lake, which like Lake Louise and the other mountain bodies of water, was glacier fed, the situation there just begged them to climb. So they clambered up the trail to see Consolation Lake from above. Surrounding mountain peaks seemed to defy them to scale their heights in the bewitching "Valley of the Ten Peaks".

Gazing down, after going some distance, the natural grandeur utterly charmed them Beneath, Moraine and Consolation Lakes rested serenely, sister lakes, with beryl-tinted, mirror-like surfaces, gently caressed by summery, white clouds.

Climbing further, with Larry assisting Judith over the difficult places—only too glad to have this opportunity to put his arm about her when the occasion demanded,—they reached the base of the unmelted snows which remain throughout the year. They rubbed their hands, tinglingly, on the glacial ice for the simple joy and novelty of being able to do so in the height of summer. Memories of Eric here, were wistfully distant and sweet.

Larry remarked when returning to Banff, "I'm beauty confused!"

That evening in Banff, after a dip in the mineral waters, Judith and Larry dressed and watched the swimmers from the stone balustrade above the Upper Sulphur Pool.

After a time, their thoughts and conversation turned from the occupants of the pool to the changes time had wrought among their old acquaintances: the births, marriages and deaths and other more general events.

Larry said a few more words about Eric's brave passing and remarked, "I never knew the man, but he must have been fine. I can't bear to see you broken-hearted!"

He was sincere and Judith was touched by his sentiment, understanding and sympathy.

They had started strolling slowly along a path and Larry put his arm tenderly about her shoulders as he looked down at her. Judith's fresh wound had been touched upon and, in this beautiful solitude, in her sudden need of human understanding, she might easily have melted into Larry's arms. Indeed, she almost did so, but, for some unexplainable reason, the face of the pretty girl at the train came to her mind. Instead, she stopped and gently disengaged herself as she said:

"Oh—Larry, let's not talk about it! It makes me feel too badly!"

Just then, Stanley Woods appeared with a party of people. He left those he accompanied for a few minutes, and, coming over, he said to Judith, "I'm glad to see you looking so well, Miss Grey!" He glanced at Larry curiously.

Judith introduced Stan and Larry and they all talked together. Judith did not think of explaining who Larry was and very shortly Stan left them, a little awkwardly, and with hesitation and inquiry in his eyes.

The following day, Judith and Larry descended from their hired motor. It had halted part way up a winding road, high up in the Rocky Mountains. They climbed down the dizzy heights to "Hoodoo Canyon", where stood a group of grey-white mounds of rock. Through the passage of time, these had withstood the work of erosion and now presented the appearance of a party of ghosts congregated together. It was a weird sight. Judith smiled as she remembered Eric's admiration for this formation, the result of a caprice of nature.

Larry remarked, gazing with hands in pockets, "It's actually spooky!"

"But, beautifully so!" answered Judith with enthusiasm.

The scene below, where the river wound like a wide silver band, was magnificent. Judith and Larry beheld it with excited wonder. Far below was Banff Resort in a majestic setting, the grandeur of which defied description and words of enthusiasm. The castle-like Banff Springs Hotel, rested like a jewel in a wondrous setting of towering mountains. Judith and Larry had to content themselves with obtain-

ing a number of pictures which would only in a small degree capture the extravagance of beauty.

"We'll never get a likeness to equal the original, I'm afraid," said Judith.

"We'd soon become millionaries selling picture postcards if that were possible!"

Returning to Banff, early, they relaxed once more by a dip in the mineral waters. Afterwards, Judith found herself actually enjoying a substantial dinner in one of the more pretentious hotels. She had prettied herself and Larry said he wanted "to show her off". He certainly loved beauty, and his attention was equally divided between herself and a flirtatious and elegantly beautiful girl across the way. Judith observed this with an amused smile. She wondered if the annoyance it hid was jealousy on her part.

Then, looking around, she started slightly. Was she haunting Stan, or was he haunting Judith? Anyway, there he was, not far away, seated with another officer. When he caught her eye, he waved a hand with a pleased smile. Then, his eyes kept straying towards her. Judith flushed slightly when she realized she would hardly notice this if her own eyes were not directed his way at the same time. The touch of pique she had felt beneath her amusement, towards Larry for his straying attention, melted, and her sense of humour came to the fore. She had almost forgotten that she owned one, for the past weeks. So, to-day she laughed and joked with Larry about everything and nothing.

Before Stan left, he came over and said, "It's nice to see you so happy!"

Judith answered with a twinkle, waving a hand airily to include both Stan and Larry in her gesture, "How can I be otherwise with such handsome and pleasant company!"

Stan remarked to Larry, "It's nice to see you again." "You too!" said Larry. Then, after Stan left, Larry said with a sigh, "Well, Judith—I must be off tomorrow, worse luck!"

Though Judith had known this right along, she felt her spirits dampen. She would be so sorry to see this old friend go. She knew she had improved immeasurably in spirits through his visit.

When saying good-bye at the train, she kissed him good—bye with genuine feeling. But to Larry, her caress answered a certain inquiry within his mind, disappointingly. However, hope still triumphed and he smiled tenderly and said, holding one of her hands for a moment longer, "Judith, I can never forget you! You'll have a letter from me tomorrow."

Judith watched him out of sight and reflected that she appreciated his sentiment for her, but she felt that he would be able to console himself with many compensations. He just naturally attracted beautiful

girls to him. As she waved to him she reflected that it was little wonder. Larry was certainly splendidly handsome. Her admiration had become boundless and she knew such regard often turned to love. Well- - perhaps—

Next day, summoned to the door by her landlady, Judith was surprised to see Stan Woods standing there and smiling at her. He said:

" I saw you pass yesterday on the way to the station with your friend. I noticed how well you looked. I thought I might intrude again, and wondered if you would like to visit the ice-fields with me. That is, if you haven't already seen them."

Judith answered, "Oh—that *would* be nice! I'd love to go with you."

It was a long trip to the Columbia Ice-fields in the Canadian Rockies and Judith was genuinely delighted to have this opportunity. They agreed to start in an hour.

Half an hour later, Judith decided to walk to the corner for a soft drink. In front of her lodgings she almost walked into Stan's arms. He explained:

"I had nothing to do, so was just waiting around and happened to stroll by."

Judith said, "I was just going for a refreshing drink. Want to come?"

"That certainly sounds good to me! You can stand my company now, can you?"

"Well Stan," Judith answered, "Time, the great healer has helped me already, I guess. And Larry's company, too, of course—and yours.'"

Stan flashed her a pleased smile when he heard his first name used so naturally, but he only said, as he ventured to return the compliment, "I only wish I had had the opportunity of helping you *more* with my company, Judith!"

Then, hesitating, he said, "Eh—is—Larry Scott an old and close friend of yours?"

"A very old friend and a close and dear one!" said Judith with appreciation for Larry.

It was nearly time for the hired motor to come for them. They arrived back at Judith's lodgings, the appointed place, just as it stopped at the door. Stan took the wheel, himself, and after he had returned the driver to his garage, they settled themselves for the trip. Judith wondered at her up-lifted spirits. She had to admit that she enjoyed being with Stan.

As the car purred along the road, Stan said, "My furlough ends day after tomorrow. I take the morning train. I'm sorry we can't

have more time together. But, sometimes an acquaintance of a few days, spells a greater friendship than one of years. I'd like to think ours is one of that kind!"

Judith answered him honestly with, "Well—I rather hope so too, Stan."

When he looked down into her eyes a light within gave him a feeling of confidence.

He said, "Oh—h—this fellow, Larry Scott; you say he's a very old friend?"

"Why, yes, very. I've known him since I wore bibs and rode tricycles."

Stan relaxed visibly. "I see!" he remarked on a relieved sigh.

They began to take notice of the glorious scenery, but were hardly able to appreciate its wealth, adequately. Between raptures, Judith felt a great content which she now felt sure was due to the satisfying company at her side. Glancing at him as they conversed, she saw that he appeared very happy, also.

When they reached the ice fields, they got out of the car and hurried forward to gaze in wonder. Near at hand, the ice was twenty feet in depth, where a mass had broken off with the heat, and gleamed, a wall of blue-white coldness on this hot summer day.

Neither having seen this place before, they felt they looked upon a marvel of nature.

A guide came over from the hotel a distance away and talked to them. When Judith asked: "Tell me—about how deep is the ice on the mountain summit above us?"

"Five hundred to a thousand feet, is the estimation," he asnwered, to their astonishment. "It will certainly never melt away."

Stan and Judith walked a few cautious paces up the ice. It began an ominous grumbling.

"It's just the ice cracking up in places," called the guide. "New chasms are continually opening up."

"Is it safe here?" Judith raised her voice to ask, with an excited laugh.

The guide pointed to a sign which they had somehow failed to notice. He shouted, "Didn't you see the sign?" The surprise he showed was very natural because it bore the warning words in large letters, in black, on a great white painted bar, "Climb only at your own risk!"

He shouted, "Of course there is some danger—especially on a hot day like this. Deep, new fissures appear here and there, often. Better come back, I think"

Then—it happened. Judith was there. A rumbling and cracking noise. Judith had disappeared!

Stan, horror stricken and white of face, clambered three or four paces along the slippery surface to where Judith had been, shouting frantically to the guide. But he, in his hob-nailed boots was already at his side and both looked down into the eight foot chasm where Judith could be seen feebly moving. A huge section of ice was very gradually approaching her, stopping, then edging on, inch by inch.

"Hold my feet—quick!" said Stan. "Lower me down to get her!" "Tie on this rope—here!" said the guide, quickly stooping and knotting Stan's feet to a length of hemp. Steadily, rapidly, he let Stan down, head-first, with mighty effort.

The bulging section of ice was only a foot from Judith when Stan reached for her, gasping, "My darling!" Judith scrambled awkwardly against the slippery blue-white surface on three sides of her, but Stan caught her securely to him and both were drawn to the surface. How—Stan couldn't figure out, until he saw the two tourists who had rendered assistance, standing tensely beside the guide.

Afterwards, he learned that they had just parked their car and, on noticing the flutter of excitement and hearing the disturbance, they had dashed to the scene in time to help. As Judith and Stan got to their feet, these two men and the guide gathered around asking anxious questions. The latter helped Stan to get out of the rope almost instantly. Then all climbed below, and as they did so, a sickening, splintering crash of ice on ice was heard. They all winced and shuddered and stared at Judith with thankful ejaculations regarding the fate she had escaped by inches.

Stan shook his head with shocked strain evident on his face. On a great sigh, he said, "You were nearly gone! I almost *lost* you."

"Yes," the guide added,, "You nearly had it that time, Miss, for *sure*!"

Judith smiled wanly, saying, "Yes, but—here I am—still cluttering up the old earth!"

She looked at Stan then—seeing him anew. He seemed suddenly like—well—someone she had known a life-time, and—yes—dear to her!

Stan asked, anxiously, "Are you sure there aren't some bones broken? Is that painful looking, long scratch on your arm and the small one on your neck, the extent of your injuries?" Judith looked at her arm and felt her neck, realizing they were stinging.

"Yes—the scratches are all that happened to me. Actually all!" marvelled Judith.

The tourists drew their attention at this time by expressing their satisfaction at the outcome of the accident. Stan and Judith asked for their names and addresses so as to contact them and show their appreciation in some way, later. In the meantime, after Mr. Thomas and Mr. Brown—as their names were found to be—had received the warm thanks of Judith and Stan, they hurried on their way, still discussing the near calamity.

When the guide, whose name, upon inquiry, was found to be Mr. Milroy, exclaimed suddenly: "Oh—I must hurry away now, to keep an appointment!" Judith shook his hand, very cordially. Stan followed suit with a hearty hand shake and the guide found a crumpled bill within his palm of satisfactory dimensions. Starting away, he smiled broadly,

"Thanks!" he exclaimed. "I see where the Missus gets that fancy hat she wants!"

Judith and Stan found that they were chilled from the atmosphere— and from the nervous tension. But both seemed to be of one mind about regaining their poise. Stan tucked Judith's hand within his arm, comfortably, as they walked about below the ice and discussed its everlasting wonder. Shortly after, when they went back to the car, it gave them a most curious sensation to walk from the winter-like air into summer weather.

Judith spent the following day in Stan's company. They had an exhilerating morning, cycling about the roads on rented bicycles. Then, they bought sandwiches and a thermos of hot coffee was supplied them by Judith's landlady, along with cups. Contentedly, they boated on the beautiful emerald river, above which mountain peaks rose on all sides. They spoke many times of yesterday's mishap and Judith was amused at her adhesive bindings.

The following day Stan had to depart. His furlough had come to an end. Judith saw him off at the station.

The morning of his departure, clouds hid the bright sun, as though to make the setting a fitting one for farewells.

Stan remarked, "How sorry I am to leave this glorified wilderness —and you!"

"And I'm very sorry to see you go!" said Judith in the deep tones of sincerity.

Then Stan said, "If you can ever forget and consider me more than a friend, I'll always be waiting for you! That's the way I feel about you, even though I haven't known you long. Really, in my heart, I think I have known you forever!"

Stan's train was about to leave. When he took Judith's hands in his, she quite naturally and frankly kissed him good-bye. If his caress was lover-like in quality, she made no sign—and certainly she found she did not mind. Stan then took her into a close embrace and kissed her with fervour. Surprised—she found she had answered in kind.

As Stan walked towards the train, which was shunting ominously, Judith replied to his urgent, last question with,

"Good-bye! Good luck! Yes—yes, of course. I'.ll write often!"

After a short interval, Stan reappeared at the rear of the train, waving. Judith waved in return and watched until he was no longer discernible.

Then, turning away, she sighed. Stan was gone.

Judith had a strange, lost feeling, as though a support on which she had been depending had been, suddenly, snatched from her and now she must go on alone.

She had hated to see Stan go. Her regret was greater, now, than she would ever have believed possible. "I guess it's because he is so sincere," she told herself. Surprised, she brushed away tears that she found in her eyes.

But, as Judith walked along the station platform, thoughtfully, the gloom of the day lifted and the sun began to shine. Deep beneath her sadness stirred new hope.

She looked about at the golden sunshine. She turned about and scanned the evergreen trees, the beautiful emerald-green Bow River and the surrounding dramatically named Rocky Mountain peaks. She thought, aloud,

"How—perfect—to have seen the beginning of a new day in this glorified wilderness!"

Path of Earthly Stars

"You signed just now," said pleasant-faced Mrs. Warren to her son, Gregory. She plied her knitting needles busily before the handsome fireplace of their luxurious living room in the apartment house hotel, which was her property. Her white-streaked head bent over an intricate stitch.

Silence still reigned, so Mrs. Warren raised her eyes to glance at her fine looking, tall son, who stood by the mantlepiece, pipe in hand. He smiled quizzically at his mother in an "I've heard this before" manner, but said nothing, so she went on:

"Gregory—I often think you are not getting all out of life that you should. I hope you're not pining for poor Dorothy after all this time!"

Gregory looked thoughtfully down at his shoe for a moment, and the light from the fire gleamed on the wave in his dark hair which he tried hard and without avail to plaster down. Then he raised his blue eyes and his even white teeth showed in a smile as he answered:

"Well—I haven't forgotten her! Why should I? I was very much in love with her!"

"I know that," said his mother. "And she was a dear. But it is four years since the fever took her away. You can't mope forever. It isn't normal. Take my advice and look around for another nice girl. The world is full of them—very lovely girls!"

"I don't exactly *mope*, Mother!" answered Greg. "But I haven't seen anyone to suit my taste—that's all! I have seen attractive girls, but they wouldn't have come up to your social expectations. There was Mable, for instance. I met her at a ball game. She turned out to be a waitress in an all-night stand. She had lovely, raven-black tresses and a Grecian profile. She was a nice girl, besides. Then, there was Caroline, who was auburn haired and so pretty! She had a sweet disposition, and there was never a more efficient chamber maid! But would you have been satisfied to have me marry either? No, you wouldn't! Oh yes—and there was that girl—"

Mrs. Warren interrupted him with upraised hand, saying, "Stop—stop! I've heard enough about them! Gregory!"

Greg walked over to the table and refilled his pipe as he answered, "Well—the socialites just seem to have no charm for me, and besides—who wants to be led around to a series of pink teas!"

"I'm afraid," answered Mrs. Warren, "that your being a concert singer has made you temperamental! Or, perhaps your being temperamental influenced your occupational choice."

"I don't know the answer," said Greg, who now stood in front of the low fire, comfortably smoking. Smiling, he added, "Besides—I'm not! You didn't spoil me, Mother."

"I tried hard not to, Greg," answered Mrs. Warren, as she put down her knitting and went to stand near him. She placed her hand on his arm as she continued:

"But you might find some one to care for again, if you would just unlock yourself mentally and break the fine skeins that seem to keep you bound to a ghost sweetheart. Please try it, dear!" She took both his hands in hers, saying earnestly, "After all—you've passed the thirty year mark now, and it's time you were getting married. Posterity needs you. Your father would have wished you to marry if he had lived, you know!"

Greg smiled widely and indulgently, thus masking his indifference to his mother's suggestion, saying, "O.K. Mother! I'll see what I can do! Maybe I'll fall for some one, one of these days. But, for your sake, I hope it isn't a scrub woman or scullery maid. That's the direction my tastes seem to run," he said lightly and teasingly, then, "I wish there were no foolish class distinctions. Those girls were very fascinating, no fooling!"

"You seem to think so, dear," answered Mrs. Warren, affectionately. She walked to the door with him, and as he stepped out of the apartment, he nearly collided with a slatternly woman, who carried a scrub bucket and whose face was surrounded by untidy hair. Turning back to his mother, Greg said with a gay smile, after apologies to the woman, "You see what I mean?" In a much lowered tone he added, "Probably has a heart of pure gold, you know!"

"Yes, very likely, poor soul," smiled his mother. "Well, good-bye, dear."

* * * * * * *

Within another suite, just as luxurious as that of Greg and Mrs. Warren, Patricia MacBurney Royal, also a concert singer, entered to find her Aunt Lois waiting up for her. Mrs. Lois MacBurney, Pattie's guardian since her parents' passing a few years previous, kissed Patricia fondly in greeting, then seated herself again with a square of embroidery, saying:

"Did Tommy Reeves bring you home again to-night, Patricia?"

"Yes, he did," answered Pattie. "He's really a dear, don't you think so? And good-looking!"

"Yes," answered her Aunt. "But you shouldn't encourage him! I can see he thinks the sun rises and sets on you, now. And don't *you* get sentimental over *him*, dear!" she went on seriously. "It might lead to thoughts of marriage, and he could never support you! You told me he just clerks in a drug store."

Patricia rose from the arm of her aunt's chair, where she had perched herself a minute before, and walked airly about, flicking imaginary dust off the furniture, as she said, "Well, Auntie—he managed to take me to the opera, and even bought this lovely orchid, I've seen you glancing at, for me to wear." She pointed to the rare and beautiful flower nestling very becomingly on her shoulder.

"Oh!" said Aunt Lois, with upraised hands and horrified expression, "Did he buy that for you? Why, he must have pawned all his possessions to do it! How could you let him!"

"I didn't know he was going to. And I did protest when he gave it to me," siad Pat.

Aunt Lois expelled the breath she had been holding in a long sigh, and shook her head. Then she went on, "Well—seriously now, Patricia, "How would you like to have to do your own cooking, cleaning and washing—as you would have to, married to a clerk."

Patricia looked at her teasingly, "Well, I don't know. Maybe I wouldn't mind."

"You don't know—that much is true," answered Aunt Lois. "You don't realize what that would mean, because you've never been in a position where you needed to learn. If Tommy were as rich as he is good-looking, things might be different. But—oh well—" she peered at Patricia, "I don't think you're in love with Tommy—are you Patricia?" asked she, shrewdly.

"No, you're right, Auntie," answered Patricia, gently patting her cheek. "So you may calm your fears. I think a lot of Tommy—but just in a sisterly way. He's so nice to me. But he's very funny and vain about his wavy hair, and if there's a mirror around—"

"How old is the boy?" asked Aunt Lois, smiling now, thro' becoming rimless glasses.

"The same age as I am," answered Particia. "Twenty-four. But, somehow, I feel older than Tommy."

"It is said girls mature faster than boys. Maybe they never catch up. So perhaps you are older than Tommy, psychologically," answered Aunt Lois.

"I think so, Auntie," answered Patricia, "But he is precious, and I like him!"

"Of course," said Aunt Lois. "But your Scotch MacBurney strain will make you cautious I hope."

"Yes, Auntie," languidly answered Pat, as she walked, stifling a yawn, toward the door. "Well—I can't stay up a minute longer. 'M too-o sleepy for more words. G'night."

* * * * * * *

The next day, Patricia, whose curiosity was aroused by the conversation with her aunt, regarding the mysteries of housework, went down to the large kitchen of the apartment house hotel. She opened her lips with a surprised and pleased expression, and softly ejaculated "Oh-h!" when she saw a tub on a raised stand, with some curtains near it. And in the tub were more curtains among generous soap suds. The package of flakes stood near.

Patricia looked around and discovered the housekeeper outside, hanging a few fine curtains on the line. She opened the door and stepped out, saying:

"Good-morning, Mrs. Gill! Oh-ah—may I try my hand at washing a few of those curtains?"

"Well now, dearie," answered Mrs. Gill, "I guess it won't do any harm. The delicate ones are all out here with me. I wouldn't trust anyone by myself with these. Go ahead if you like, honey. You want to experiment?"

"Yes," answered Pattie, "That's the general idea. You're sure you don't mind now?"

The housekeeper, Mrs. Gill, shook her head, indulgently and smiled. So Patricia went in, and finding a pretty apron on a nearby hook, she covered her expensive tailored dress with it. She began to rub busily on the wash-board among plenty of soap bubbles.

A man's voice sounded, growing louder, which indicated its owner was approachinr.

"Mrs. Gill! Mrs. Gill! Are you there?" Then a very personable young man appeared, tall and very fine looking.

It was Greg Warren, and he stopped still in surprise when he saw Pat, saying, "Oh-h-! Mrs. Gill is outside, is she? Oh, well—later will do. And how are you today? Hard at work I see. You look very pretty among those bubbles. You must be new here?" His eyes watched her, admiringly.

Patricia stopped her apparent labours to brush a trailing curl of hair from her face. "Yes," she answered, "I'm the new maid. Just luxing some curtains. I enjoy it."

"It's the best thing in the world to love your work," approved Greg. "But between you and me, you're much too pretty to be hidden away in a kitchen. Do you know something? I'm lonesome! If you are not busy to-morrow afternoon, will you go boating with me?"

"Wel-l" considered Patricia, "If the housekeeper doesn't know. You see, I'm not supposed to go out with the guests here. But to-morrow is my afternoon off. Perhaps I could just meet you at the park entrance." She looked at Greg, and received a "yes" flash from his eyes, and an emphatic nod.

Smilingly, she started to rub the curtains again. Greg felt that he was holding up some serious work, so he smiled sunnily, and with a cheery "O.K." disappeared again.

The following day, Patricia met Greg at the appointed place. There was mischief in her eye, and she chewed gum, busily. Her fussy dress was not the conventional one for boating.

"Well!" said Greg, heartily, "You're right on time. And prettier than ever, do you know that?" He looked into her eyes with a delighted expression, then tucked her hand in the crook of his arm. They walked happily down to the small dock, and there he helped her into the boat.

The sun shone on the bright blue of the water, and gentle ripples whispered with serene mood to the sides of the dock.

Greg looked about and said, "We're lucky to have such a grand day! By the way, I actually don't know your name yet! I'll bet it's as pretty as yourself."

"It's Hulga Svensen," answered Patricia. "I'm Swede, you see."

"Oh!" said Greg. "You're as fair as an angel, and I thought you were of English descent. So that's where you got the beautiful golden hair."

"Yes," fibbed Pat, "And you haven't told me your name yet!"

"It's Greg Warren," said he. "You may as well know that I'm the concert singer."

"Oh, yes!" said Patricia. "I have a ticket to your next concert."

"You have! So you're fond of music! And what do you do for excitement?"

"Well—" answered Patricia, casting her eyes down in bashful manner, "I go to the movies with Olie, the ice-man, sometimes. And" she raised her eyes, "I sing in a choir."

"You do!" exclaimed Greg, surprised, "Let's sing now. I'll start! He began to sing a familiar melody in which Patricia later joined, "New Love is Like the Rose Dawn in the deep-blue morning sky! One day in spring, we found love—you and I." After they had sung it through

once, Greg stopped singing and nodded to Pattie to continue alone: As she did so, his eyes shone with admiration.

When Patricia came to the end, he exclaimed, "Bravo! That was fine singing! And you looked so nice without that gum you discarded. Now, I can see why Emily Post says girls shouldn't chew gum in public. Without it your beauty is—Well, you are *beautiful*!"

"I only chew gum to keep my false teeth in place," teased Patricia, laughing.

Gregory laughed also, with disbelief, as he said, "Let me see your teeth!"

So Patricia flashed him a magazine cover smile, revealing perfectly arranged pearls.

When she closed her lips again, her eyes still shone with laughter and Greg suddenly yielded to impulse and kissed her. Patricia tensed with surprise for a moment, then relaxed and found herself returning the caress. When Greg released her, as she smoothed her hair, he broke happily into song again, "True love is like the glory, blazing in the evening sky. Our hearts have caught that flame on high." Greg halted and Patricia carried the song, "Sunrise and sunset, glow with purple, red and gold, on high. New Love is Like the Rose Dawn, in the deep-blue Morning Sky.'

"You take my breath away!" exclaimed Geg at the finish. "Where did you learn to sing like that? You must have had a great deal of voice training?"

"I've sung in a choir for years," answered Patricia, "and that's good training!"

Where did you go to school?" asked Greg, curiously. "You're very intelligent. Anyone can see that!"

"I went through twelve grades of school. That's all, I'm afraid," answered Patricia.

"You shouldn't be working in anyone's kitchen," admonished Greg, "—except your own!"

"Really—Mr. Warren!" laughed Patricia, "This is so sudden!" They laughed gaily.

"Seriously," said Gregory, "It would be better for you to work in a store or office. You might even sing somewhere!"

"Now, you're flattering me, Mr. Warren!"

"No—" protested Greg, "I mean it! You have a voice! And by the way, the name's Greg!"

"Thank you," answered Patricia. "And—look! We're nearly back!"

"So we are!" exclaimed Greg, turning around. "And all too soon! It's been perfect! We must try it again soon. *And* we'll take in a show. To-morrow night! How about that? Would you like to see a movie with me—if Olie doesn't mind! Cary Grant is on right now. Must we meet somewhere again?"

"Yes, to everything!" answered Patricia, airily. "In front of the Capitol at eight!"

"Well *fine*!" exclaimed Greg, helping her out of the boat and tying it

As they walked along, Greg said, "You're really a remarkable girl. Why—to tell you the truth, I'm more than half in love with you, already! I couldn't sleep a wink even last night! Your vision got between me and the sheep I tried to count. Now, we'll go into that little restaurant up the street, here, and then I'll put you in a taxi—all safe and sound, and homeward bound!" He slipped his hand thro' her arm.

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A few days later, as Patricia finished singing a concert number on the stage, just before the last curtain, she glanced off stage, and saw Tommy Reeves awaiting her.

He was a tall, clean cut, good-looking man, quite youthful looking, and with a habit of smoothing his hair back, frequently.

When Patricia finally bowed her way off the stage, after the last encore, he went swiftly forward, greeting her with, "Hello, Angel!" Gazing rapturously at her, he continued, "Here—take these throat disks I brought you from the drug store. Awfully good for the throat of a singer!" Having delivered them, he slipped a small comb from his pocket and gave his wavy hair a few deft strokes.

"Oh! Thanks, Tommy!" smiled Patricia. "You're very thoughtful! Lucky for me you work in a drug store!"

Patricia looked very beautiful in her becoming costume.

After she had changed into an enchanting blue suit and white hat, Tommy took her into a smart restaurant for a light lunch, and then home. It was by that time quite late, so he left her at the door.

His feeling and respect for Patricia glowed in his eyes. He looked as tho' he would like to kiss her good-night, but instead, he just pressed her hands, looked deeply into her eyes with a smile, and said "Good-night, Angel." He turned to wave his hand as she entered her apartment.

Some days later, Tommy was at work in the drug store. A pretty girl clerk, Trudy Norwood, and his friend, Paul Williams, also a clerk, were very busy behind the counter. During a lull, Trudy caught Tommy's arm for a moment to gain his attention, and said,

"Tommy, you must be crazy about that proud and haughty singer, Patricia Royal. But—when she passes you up—and she will, when she grows tired of you—you can count on me. And you won't have to buy me orchids—or anything! I like you for *yourself*. I'd tag along, wherever you wanted to go, or whatever you wanted to do!" Trudy, when finished this declaration gave him a radiant smile. Then, after looking around to make sure she was unobserved, where they stood behind a tall and elaborate perfume advertisement, she quickly gave him a kiss on the cheek. Tommy looked embarrassed, but smiled kindly.

A few days later, Patricia walked into the same drug store, and slipped onto a stool at the soda fountain. She placed her hand bag on the counter and took off her hat, then sighed comfortably. Seeing her, Trudy swaggered up from her place behind the drug counter with a chip on her shoulder. She said to Patricia:

"Well—you sipping mere sodas today?"

Surprised, Patricia smilingly answered, "Yes—please make it pineapple, will you?"

Trudy complied because she wanted to talk to Patricia, in spite of the fact that her work was not at the soda fountain. Trudy's manner gave Patricia an inkling of the truth.

Trudy went on, when she returned with to soda, "Why can't you leave poor Tommy alone and quit playing with him! Hasn't he sacrificed enough for you by sleeping on a park bench for a week in order to buy you orchids and take you to operas?"

"He didn't do that!!" exclaimed Patricia.

"Oh, he didn't!" answered Trudy scornfully, "Well, he isn't here just now. But Paul, his best friend, is. Paul! PAUL!" she called, hissing to gain his attention. Paul put down a box and approached.

"Paul," said Trudy, "didn't Tommy sleep in the park for a week to keep the fine lady in orchids and operas?"

Paul looked embarrassed, but said, "Well—I guess he owed his landlady some money, so she wouldn't let him keep the room any longer. But he bunked with me for the last few days of the week when I found out about his predicament. I guess he must think you are all right, Miss Royal. Not many fellows would do that much for a girl!"

Patricia looked pained as she answered, "But I never dreamed he had done such a thing!"

"I suppose not," answered Paul, "But where do you think a drug clerk would get the money to buy orchids—or even attend operas? Oh, well, never mind! You didn't know, and Tommy's as snug as a bug in a rug, in a comfortable room now." He smiled reassuringly at Patricia, then looked indignantly at Trudy, and left to serve a customer.

The shock of the revealing incident left Patricia bowled over, and feeling guilty, sorry and ashamed. She walked slowly and thoughtfully out of the drug store.

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One day Gregory Warren sat talking to Mark Stafford, producer and director, in the latter's office. He had settled himself in a chair after greetings when Mark Stafford said:

"Have you heard the bad news? Well—maybe it's bad! Madame Marcetti was taken to the hospital this morning, early, with acute appendicitis. The operation was quite successful, luckily. But it leaves us without a leading lady, because the understudy, Miss Barrie, was given her call to the service just at this awkward time! I have managed to get the lovely Patricia Royal to do the part. Luckily, she knows all the numbers. Has sung every one herself, many times. It's a bit of a relief to be without Madame Marcetti. Whew! She has a strong will—and a stronger won't!" His humorous eyes twinkled.

"Yes!" said Greg, "She does have a very harpy disposition!" They laughed, and Greg continued, "Well, all I can say, is, I hope Miss Patricia Royal doesn't develop laryngitis now. Then we would be in a stew, with the curtain nearly up."

"Yes," said Mark Stafford, "It won't be long, now. And that *would* be too much! Some scenery hasn't arrived, and two costumes can't be found. But don't get me wrong. I'm not kicking! That was just a twitch. But, if Miss Royal did develop laryngitis, I would say the fates had started a whsipering campaign against the show."

Greg had risen to go, so Mark threw an arm lightly about the shoulder of his friend and they walked down the room and into the hall, continuing the conversation.

Greg asked, "What sort of person is Miss Royal. Tell me about her."

"We-ll," considered Mark Stafford, "They say she's very haughty and full of whims. But *I* think it's just her beauty, dress and carriage which give that impression. Or professional jealousy, perhaps, gave rise to the rumour. I've seen her here and there. I don't pay much attention to heresay. I'm quite prepared to like the lady. And, by the way, she claims she can only get here in time for her cue. Claims it is absolutely impossible to do otherwise. Considering the spot we're in, we'll have to abide by what she will do. And—she being a professional and knowing the songs—we have little worry about. We must honour the queen with a banquet after the show ends. The crowning event!"

Very soon after, Greg Warren, on the opening night, was singing a famous number. At her cue, Patricia Royal advanced toward his outstretched hand in Madame Marcetti's former role. Greg's fine

voice soared, enchanting the audience with its quality and he smiled as he turned with outstretched hand to greet his leading lady.

When he beheld Patricia, his voice caught in his throat, but he managed to cover up successfully. Later, during a passage where his voice was intended to be silent while she sang, he mumbled, "Of course, I knew your setting should not be anyone else's kitchen but I never expected to find you here! My heart beat is soffocating me! Those awful lies! We'll have to talk this over after the performance." He smiled radiantly at the audience which had noticed nothing amiss, then sang again, "Purple Dusk descending —day is on the wane; thoughts of you transcending, lin love's sweet refrain."

After they changed into street clothes, Patricia joined Greg at the stage exit. They left the bright lights and strolled along a quiet street, overshadowed by trees and reached a small corner park. They noticed that the moon shone above like a burnished silver disk and the stars, seemingly, were trying to outshine past glory. Spontaneously, they embraced and kissed. They found a bench close by and there Greg held Patricia very close to his heart. After a short silence, since it was always an urge within Greg to express his emotions in song, he sang softly, as he looked into Patricia's eyes with adoration, "Join Me in Love—while bright moon beams; enchanted, we shall dream our dreams. Our lives and hearts, may heaven bless, with everlasting happiness. Near to your heart and then adieu; but soon I'll always be with you—"

Then, they found a quiet cafe nearby and occupied a secluded table where they were able to have an engrossing conversation in company which each found most pleasant. Greg finally found courage to ask, as he held Patricia's hands across the table:

"I hope there is no one else—is there dear?"

Just then, the waiter interrupted them, saying:

"Pardon me. May I help you further in any way? I'm so sorry, but it's closing time!"

He placed the check on the table. As Patricia rose, he slipped her cloak about her shoulders, still looking apologetic and trying hard to be courteous.

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A few days later, as Pat sat reading, the phone rang. She arose to answer it, saying, "Oh-h, hello Tommy! Well, I was going shopping for a new hat. Why—yes—do come along and be the judge. Well—I'm free the rest of the day."

Later in the day she and Tommy left the hat salon with the latter gazing admiringly at the new blue veiled creation charmingly framing Patricia's face. He said, "You look beautiful!"

They then got into the elevator and in it were surprised to find Tommy's aunt, very richly dressed. A Parisian model of expensive elegance perched on her waved white coiffure.

"Aunt Janet!" exclaimed Tommy. "This is Miss Patricia Royal. Pattie, my Aunt Janet—otherwise, Mrs. Janet Forsythe Reeves. I am just her poor relation."

"You're a very fine boy, indeed, Tommy!" protested Aunt Janet.

"Well—*that* makes me feel good!" said Tommy. "Let's go for a cocktail and dinner."

"Oh-ah-" hesitated his aunt, "I'll go along if you'll let me pay the check. What I'm in the mood for, your drug store wages for the month would never cover! Agreed?"

"Well, maybe I'll let you and maybe I won't, you tyrant!" said Tommy, laughing.

They followed out their plan, and later, seated at dinner, Tommy's Aunt Janet cultivated her acquaintance with Pattie and evidently had a most enjoyable time. At one point, Tommy, neglected, but smiling happily, said, "Hey, you two! I'm being left out!"

At the conclusion of the dinner, Tommy, while plying the inevitable small comb, said, "Come on Aunt Janet, we're all going dancing. We'll make a real evening of this!"

"You can count me out!" answered Aunt Janet. "I have an excruciatingly painful corn and if you stepped on it, I should bellow. Just you put me in a taxi for home, Tommy!"

When leaving them, she patted Patricia on the shoulder, affectionately, and invited her to dine at her home the following day.

"You aunt is really a dear, isn't she!" said Pattie, watching the taxi disappear.

"Yes," asnwered Tommy, "And I can see you've made a big hit with her too. Sometimes she's a bit eccentric, I'm afraid. That's because she has a mint of money and usually gets whatever she wants in life!"

Three days later, Tommy's Aunt Janet called him on the drug store phone and said, "Come to dinner, to-night, if you're not busy, Tommy, I have a turkey all to myself."

"Say—" exclaimed Tommy, "That sounds *good*! I'll be glad to help you out with it!"

While at dinner, Aunt Janet said, "Your Patricia Royal paid me a visit of two or three hours, day before yesterday. Where did you find such a treasure in character and beauty! And she says she is very fond of you!"

"She's a wonderful girl!" agreed Tommy. "Her father was a brilliant lawyer, you know."

"Oh-h—was he!" exclaimed Aunt Janet. "Well!!" She wore a beaming smile, Tommy, not knowing her pet enthusiasm, smiling but mystified, answered:

Why—yes!" with unconscious but natural interrogation in his reply.

"You see," explained his aunt, looking dreamily out the window, "I was in love with a professional man once—a doctor!" For a minute she was silent then went on, briskly, "But a beautiful nurse got him. I've never quite been able, though I loved your late uncle, to get over thinking that men of the professions are best and most desirable!"

Shaking her head, she chuckled in ridicule of herself, then poured two sparkling glasses of champagne and handed one cool, slender stemmed glass to Tommy. After they had clinked them together in a good-luck toast, she laid her hand on Tommy's arm and said:

"I tell you Tommy!" She finished her drink and Tommy glowed from the effects of his. "You and Patricia are both wonderful people." She continued, "You'd make a grand pair! Marry her and I'll leave all my money to you and set you up in business immediately!"

"Aunt Janet!!" laughed the surprised Tommy. "Don't *rush* me! She might not have me!"

"Why not?" challenged Aunt Janet. "They don't come any better than you. You under rate yourself! Tou're a very good-looking, clean cut young chap. You're a real Forsythe. And besides, Patricia really seems to be very fond of you! Here—I want you to take a cheque from me and go courting in real style, Tommy!"

"I can't take money from you, Aunt Janet—I really can't!" exclaimed Tommy.

"Nonsense!" said his aunt. "You'd take it if I were in the next world! Why not while I'm still in this one! If pride stands in your way, consider that it is to be spent on Patricia—or for her, at any rate. I *want* you to *do* this for me! It means a great deal to me! And the next time I see you, I want you to have a wardrobe fit for a prince, and cut an elegant figure. For, if you're pleasing to my critical eye, you'll certainly be attractive in Patricia's sight. All right Tommy, take it to please me!"

So Tommy accepted the cheque, very reluctantly, saying as he pocketed it:

"Well—thank you, Aunt Janet!" Troubled still, he tried to smile appreciatively.

Her object accomplished, his Aunt Janet glowed with pleasure

as she patted his shoulder, and then poured two tal[1], cool glasses of sparkling champagne to celebrate.

The next day Tommy called Patricia by phone, and she agreed to attend a vaudeville.

After she had enjoyed the show thoroughly, Tommy suggested a walk. He shepherded her away from the busy thoroughfare to a street where quietness predominated. Strolling along, they crossed a bridge and came to some tress, with scattered benches in the shadows.

Tommy suggested, "Shall we sit down for a minute?" Patricia agreed, so they did so.

"Nice here, isn't it?" he remarked, as tho' he hadn't planned their present setting. He looked about at the shadowy trees and fragrant flowers, made magic in the moonlight.

Turning back, he said, "I have some good news for you! And very unexpected!" He was most confident. He took Patricia's arm and looked into her eyes, as he continued:

"You know—I've always loved you. You must have realized that. I always have and I always will. I wanted to tell you so, ever since I first met you, but I never felt that I was in a position to do so. *Now*, it's all right!"

Patricia, at the beginning of his impulsive speech, covered his lips with her hand in an attemot to stop him but he only kissed it tenderly and rushed on, saying,

"And therein lies the surprise! Aunt Janet has made it possible for me to speak. In fact, we can go on a honeymoon around the whole world, if we like!"

Patricia interrupted with, "Tommy! You're asking me to marry you! Well—I—"

"Yes!" answered Tommy, with shining eyes, "Aunt Janet will set me up in business and plans leaving all her money to me, *if* you marry me. You certainly made a hit with her! She thinks you're the only girl in the world for me. She fell for your charms as hard as I did—if that's possible! Gosh! Just think! You! A business of my own! Plenty of money in the bank! An heir to a million or so! No wonder I'm excited. Didn't you feel a tenseness in the air while we were in the show!? I found it hard to stay there and sit still, because I could hardly wait to tell you all about it. But you were enjoying the entertainment so much, I couldn't suggest leaving early!"

The surprise of it all, and Tommy's preoccupation with his subject and excited enthusiasm, kept Patricia silent, just watching him. It would have been impossible to stem the tide, and this was easy for her to understand. A fortune is not an every day gift!

So Tommy continued uninterrupted, "And just think! No more shabby rooms. A beautiful home for both of us instead! No more small-time budgeting! *And* no more park benches. so that I can take the most wonderful girl in the world to the best places, in the manner befitting her! Next time I come to call on you, I'll bring you a *bouquet* of orchids. I felt terrible when Paul told me you knew about the whole incident. But it is only amusing now!"

"Well—" he sat back and looked at Patricia, "tell me—how soon can we be married, and where will the wedding be?" He looked at her more closely, now, continuing:

"You *do* love me, don't you? Just tell me you do—and we can plan later. Have I been too hasty? You can think the whole thing over, and answer later, if you like! It *is* sudden, of course." At last he paused and waited for Patricia to speak.

After a minute's hesitation, she did so, thoughtfully, "I don't know for sure, Tommy." Gathering courage for a plunge, she ventured, "I don't know that I love you enough."

"Well," declared Tommy, "If you love me a little, it's just a matter of time!"

"But—I'm afraid I don't love you in that way, Tommy. It's just——"

Tommy broke in with, "But you will—you will! I swear I'll make you love me as much as I love you!" His eyes glowed with love and determination.

Patricia, liking Tommy immensely, and having had a graphic demonstration of his love for her, in the past, thereby realizing the full extent of his devotion, was most hesitant to hurt his feelings and upset his house of dreams. So she lost her courage, and answered in a troubled voice, "Well—I'll try, Tommy," and knew it was not wise.

But in her mind was the idea that she would gently explain to him later, and so ease the shock that her refusal might be to him at present.

Tommy rose and pulled her up, saying, "Well, then, everything is set!" He kissed her.

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Some days later, Patricia and her Aunt Lois sat in their apartment. Patricia was knitting a crew-necked service sweater, and her aunt was progressing with her embroidery.

Patricia rose, saying to the accompaniment of the softly playing radio:

"I feel the need of a walk! I think I'll go and commune with the birds in the park. I'll take some crackers for them. It's getting cool at this late season, and they must get hungry."

"Fine, dear! But dress warmly!" said her aunt, looking up with a smile.

Patricia walked briskly along and was soon seated in the park, where she threw cracker crumbs to the birds. Without realizing it, she began to sing an air, softly. A young girl, about ten years old, suddenly appeared before her, saying, "Oh—you have such a nice voice! I sing too!" Her face, surrounded by brown curls, expressed intense admiration.

"You do!" said Patricia, kindly. "And what is you name, dear."

"It's Elva Blake," was the answer. "I sing in the Church choir. At Christmas time I'm going to sing my first solo. It will be 'Silent Night! Holy Night!' My mother and dad are so proud about it. They want me to be a real singer when I get older."

"Will you sing part of your song now?" asked Patricia. "That song is so beautiful!"

"Yes," agreed Elva. "I have the words on a piece of paper in my pocket. Anyway, I think I know them by heart. I'm always singing them!"

After Elva had sung two verses, Patricia sang the third one with her, softly. Then she said, earnestly, "Tou sing that beautifully, dear! Thank you."

Elva explained, "My teacher says I'll sing with more character when I am older and have more of life's experience. I think she means when I am old enough to fall in love. Are you in love, to sing like you do?" The cinema had given Elva quaint ideas.

Patricia answered, "Well—yes. I believe I am!"

"You are!" said Elva, interestedly. "Oh—what is the man like?"

"He sings, too." answered Patricia. "In concerts—very wonderfully!"

"Oh—that's just perfect!" exclaimed Elva, enchanted by this real-life story she was hearing unfolded. "I'll bet lots of men are in love with you tho'—you're so pretty! But a girl can't love more than one man, can she?" she continued in a "tell me more" manner, with her young eyes wide and questioning.

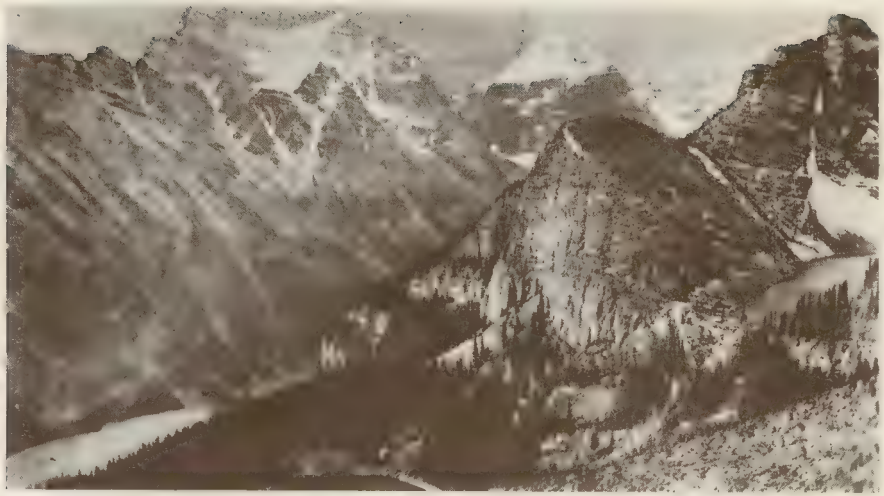
"No, I don't think that's possible," laughed Patricia, lightly. "Not in the romantic way you mean. Of course she could care for another man in a sisterly or maternal way. Motherly, I mean. Well—" started she, trying to change the subject.

"Oh! I see. You mean you could like another man a whole lot."

"Say!" said Elva, changing the subject of her own accord as a truant thought struck her busy mind, "If you would—we could walk a block to my church and play the organ or piano and practice my Christmas song, together with music. *Will you*?" said she eagerly.

Columbia Icefields and Athabasca Mountain
—Photo by Photocrafts, Calgary

Lake Louise —*Photo by Photocrafts, Calgary*



Lakes in the Clouds

Moraine Lake and Valley of the Ten Peaks

Bow Valley from Banff Springs Hotel —*Photo by Photocrafts, Calgary.*

"Why—yes!" answered Patricia, with pleasure. "If you'd like to, we'll go now!"

At the church, seated before a piano, Patricia and Elva played and sang the song. With the fragment of paper before them, both sang softly. It was beautiful—and serious, somehow. As she sang, Patricia found Greg's face pictured before her, as so often of late. She allowed herself to dream for amoment. Then her eyes focused on a framed motto on the opposite wall of the church. The words, standing out plainly read, "Think Not of Thyself!" She found herself taking it as a personal rebuke. A mist gathered in her eyes as she forced herself to think of Tommy and dismiss thoughts of Greg.

* * * * * * *

Not long after, a gay party was arranged at the home of Tommy's Aunt Janet, to entertain numerous friends. Among those present were Tommy, Patricia, Greg and Mark Stafford.

Tommy and Aunt Janet joined Patricia during the course of the event with happy smiles and a certain purposeful expression shared between them, which denoted a plan.

"Patty—" said Tommy, "Aunt Janet and I both think it would be wonderful if we could announce our engagement tonight!" Patricia stared in surprise.

"Yes!" said Aunt Janet with excitement. "I can't think of anything that would give me so much pleasure, my dear!" She shook her head with feeling and her glowing eyes looked into those of Patricia, as she continued, "Never have I seen a girl I've liked better than you! The day I see you and Tommy married, I can die content and happy. Not that I don't expect to live for a long time yet," she chuckled. "But I *do* love to surprise people, and here's the chance of a lifetime. Please say it's all right, dear!"

Patricia glanced with trepidition in her eyes to the place where Greg stood, talking and laughing with Mark Stafford and two other men. She then looked back at Tommy and his aunt, who awaited with glad expectation for her to say the anticipated word.

She had to say something, so this she did, hesitantly, "Well-l, I don't know. Perhap—"

Tommy had misunderstood. "Perhaps! she says!" he exclaimed, turning to his aunt. "*Perhaps* it's all right! You're just shy and modest! Come on Patricia! Aunt Janet! Now!"

His Aunt Janet took Patricia by the hand, urging her forward, and also grasped Tommy's hand in hers. She led them, one on each side of her, to the middle of the room and there tapped sharply on the table as a call to attention. In a minute, all had ceased conversation and were gazing at her with smiling regard.

"Friends!" she said in a loud, clear voice. "Ladies and gentlemen! My dear guests, I have a pleasant surprise for you this evening. I want to pass on to you some knowledge which is very agreeable to me! You see before you the future Mr. and Mrs. Thomas David Reeves! My nephew, Tommy, and Patricia Royal." She turned and faced the pair with a radiant smile. There was no question as to her pleasure in the passage of events.

Patricia smiled rather forcedly and her eyes, which *would* cast themselves down, only gave the appearance of shyness and self-consciousness on her part.

Gregory at first managed to maintain a set smile, but afterwards he found the muscles of his face stiffening. But a minute after he managed to summon a constrained smile.

The general assembly of friends surged up with gay congratulations and exclamations, to the place where Tommy stood, looking very happy indeed, with Patricia.

As soon after as possible, when Patricia saw Greg alone for a minute, she grasped the opportunity to approach him.

"Gregory!" she said, rapidly, excitedly, "What must you be thinking!"

"Thinking!" he answered, with a slight frown, "I'm surprised—that's all! I thought you understood. I thought *we* understood! Are you in love with Tommy Reeves?"

"Well-l," said Patricia, attempting to explain, "You see—I love him in a w——"

"He's a very fine fellow!" interrupted Greg, tersely. "I hope you'll be very happy. He bowed slightly, and strode off, his eyes icy.

* * * * * * *

On Christmas Eve, in a smart new banquet hall called "The Elite", situated in a choice suburban locality, stood a shimmering Christmas tree, surrounded by a brightly decorated scene. It was a beautiful room, and in the centre stood a great table agleam with silver, alight with candles and gay with flowers. Every detail gave an air of resplendence, and of festivity. Guests, costumed for this gala occasion, stood and sat about, awaiting the honor guest who was almost unpardonably late: Patricia Royal.

The convener of the banquet, responsible for serving the dinner, approached Mr. Mark Stafford and said in a low voice as he frowned with worry:

"Everything has been ready for some time, sir! If the food is kept much longer, it won't be at its best. When shall we be able to serve?"

Mr. Stafford took out his watch, very deliberately, trying not to show his chagrin. The chatter died down, as the guests looked at him,

hoping to find some solution to the mystery of where Patricia Royal was, and why she was not here, as expected. Only the murmur of the radio, playing softly, was heard before Mr. Stafford broke the silence, saying, "The honour guest hasn't arrived. We'll have to wait a little *longer.*"

Then he tried to be cheery and relieve a trying situation, by chuckling as he said, "The waiters shouldn't mind. They've been practicing the art steadily." He patted the convener's shoulder as he smiled dismissal.

"Well, seriously," said Mark Stafford for the benefit of the crowd, "Miss Royal should have been here long ago, and that's *all* I know. All!"

He walked over to Greg, who stood near, and remarked in a lowered tone, "I don't know—perhaps she *is* subject to whims. I wouldn't have thought it of her, myself! And after we tried so hard to do her proud! Well——"

The radio had increased in volume and Mr. Stafford suddenly became rigid in the act of rubbing his forehead in puzzlement.

"Listen!" said he with excitement, "*Can* that be Miss Royal's voice on the radio. I won——"

At the self-same time, Greg burst forth with, "That's *Patricia's* voice!!"

A guest who happened to be near the radio, turned the volume control, and the singing voice became louder. A general murmur of exclamations sounded—

"That's *her* voice!" "That's Miss Royal singing!" etc.

On that same day, Elva Blake, Patricia's young friend, the choir singer, kissed her father and mother at the door.

"Good-bye Daddy!" she said.

"Bye!" he reponded with a smile and wave. "And be careful!"

Elva smiled agreement, and turning to her mother she said, "I think I'll get a *blue* ribbon and flower to wear with my new dress."

"Yes" said her mother. "Oh—and get silk hose in that new shade if you can. You must look your very best when you sing to-night!"

"This is *thrilling*!" said Elva, dancing a few steps. "I did have my bath, this morning mother, you know," she advised, "So there won't be a big rush at the last minute."

She waved good-bye as she walked happily away. On and on she went, till she was far out of sight of her parents who had watched from the window. She was immersed in dreams of her coming big moment, when she would sing her first solo in church, and which was to be broadcast on the radio, besides.

Great misfortune awaited her. As she stepped in front of a car at a busy intersection, its owner tried hard to put on the brakes in time to avoid hitting her, but failed, and they screeched as tho' with mechanical horror, as Elva fell to the pavement. She lay there pitifully crumpled and white-faced. Her hat lay where it descended from the air, a distance off, and her hair trailed on the road.

A physician who had happened along in his car at that minute, made a swift examination, and said, "I can't tell the extent of the girl's injuries just yet. I'll have to get her to a hospital."

A policeman who had suddenly appeared from nowhere, got in the car and held her as the doctor suggested, with great care, as they drove off.

Shortly after, Elva lay in bed in a neat hospital room. Her mother and a kind looking nurse leaned over the form which had begun to toss its arms. Mrs. Blake held a handkerchief to her eyes which were red with weeping, as she gaxed intently at her child. Her carefully waved dark hair had become slightly dishevelled. The words which Elva was trying to express, finally became audible. She was saying, "Mother—please call—Patricia Royal. She promised to listen to my song on the radio—from The Elite banquet hall—in the suburbs. She won't hear me now!"

Elva lay still again, and the nurse felt her pulse as she nodded to Mrs. Blake to go.

Very soon, Mrs. Blake contacted Patricia by phone and said in a voice of tears: "I'm so glad I found you still in! Elva was knocked down by a car and hurt, so she can't sing to-night. She wanted me to phone and explain to you why you wouldn't hear her voice on the radio, as promised, singing her solo from the church. It was her first thought on regaining consciousness. She—"

"Oh-h—" breathed Patricia, only now being able to summon her voice from the shock she felt. "How terrible! Is she seriously hurt? She will get well—won't she?"

"I hope so, of course!" answered Mrs. Blake with heart-break in her tones. "But we won't know how badly she is hurt until she is X-rayed—some time soon, I hope."

"I—I wish I could *do* something! I want to help her in some way! Let me see—she was to sing in about forty-five minutes, wasn't she? I'm due at the banquet but—I wonder if—, I'll do it! Listen, Mrs. Blake—has Elva a radio in her hospital room?"

"Oh—ah, yes, I did notice one there, but what—"

"Well—" said Patricia, "First I'll dash over to the hospital in a taxi, and then—"

"Oh—I'm sorry!" interrupted Mrs. Blake, "No one is allowed to see her but her parents. I think her father must be with her now. But you see—no one else—"

"I see—I understand!" answered Patricia. "Well—please have the radio turned on at the time Elva was scheduled to sing, 'Silent Night, Holy Night', and if she is awake and conscious, she'll hear my voice singing for her from the church. I want to do some little thing for her. If that brings her any brightness, that's all I care about."

"But what about your banquet!" said Mrs. Blake in a voice of dismay.

"Never mind about that!" answered Patricia. "I'll phone them. They won't miss me much."

"You *do* want to help Elva, don't you!" said Mrs. Blake with understanding. "You must be as dear as Elva says you are. God bless you, Miss Royal!" They said good-bye.

Time was speeding, so Patricia dialed the banquet hall, but the line was busy. There was not a minute to lose, so she reached for her purse, hat and coat and put them on as she half-ran.

In a very short time, Patricia alighted from the taxi she had hailed, in front of the church. Going in, she found a profusion of flowers decorating the interior. The pews for the choir had a foreground of blossoms which was beautiful to behold.

Patricia found that she had arrived in time to explain briefly to the shocked but very understanding parson, and take Elva's place as the choir filed in to their positions.

The ceremony soon proceeded to the place which Patricia had volunteered to fill.

Among the setting of flowers, and surrounded by the other gowned choir members, Patricia appeared like a very rare and lovely blossom, herself. She held the ragged scrap of paper which Elva had given to her, on which were written the words, just out of sight of the congregation. Accompanied by the grandeur of organ music, Patricia sang the familiar and beautiful sacred song, "Silent Night! Holy Night!" with fitting pathos.

Afterwards, the parson announced that "Miss Patricia Royal" had sung the song from his church. He explained, "Miss Royal has been most fine in leaving other important appointments that she might sing in place of, and for a child who is a friend of hers and who has been seriously hurt in a car accident." He explained that it was not known as yet just how serious were her injuries, as she had not been X-rayed, but he knew the prayers of the congregation were with her. He said Miss Royal sang with the wish that if Elva Blake were awake and conscious, she might hear her song, and thus be provided with a

little spark of happiness and comfort, and with it, perhaps a little added hope!

He added, "I must commend Miss Patricia Royal for this Christian deed. I thank her also, very sincerely for her exceptional rendition of a lovely Christmas song."

Back at the banquet hall, among those awaiting Miss Royal's appearance, the timbre of the conversation had changed. Greg's resentment toward Patricia was entirely submerged.

Mark Stafford remarked with emphasis, "That was very fine of Miss Royal. I thought she had the right stuff! But—she can never get to the banquet hall to-night!"

"I think I can still get her here in time!" said Greg. "Where's the phone?"

"Over there!" answered Mark Stafford. "But—my dear fellow—that church is twenty-five miles from this suburban banquet hall! And with traffic regulations, an hour won't—"

"Yes!" agreed Greg. "But there's a landing field near both places, and a friend of mine owns a plane. One can sometimes wangle red tape in an emergency. And if it costs a hundred dollars—or a thousand even—it's worth it!"

After a little pulling of ropes by phone, only a short time elapsed before Patricia descended from the air-plane of Greg's grinning friend, into the welcoming arms of Greg. The admiring glances which the pilot of the plane cast Patricia's way, as she disappeared with Geeg, portrayed the fact that his task had been anything but a distasteful one. He was, indeed, thrilled and enchanted, and later refused to take "a dime!"

Greg and Patricia dashed to the waiting taxi, and were at the banquet hall in practically no time.

Patricia entered, a little dishevelled, but rather more charming than otherwise, for that. Greg helped her out of the fur coat she wore and untied the scarf wound about her head. Hastily she powdered her nose and smoothed down her hair before a convenient mirror, and approached the waiting and welcoming people.

They were saying such things as, "That was really *grand* of you!" "It was *so nice* of you to do as you did!" and "You were magnificent, Miss Royal!"

Mark Stafford stepped forward, saying, "Behold my friend—the heroine!"

Soon, commonplaces returned to the conversation, and remarks were made such as, "But we're all *starved*, my dear!" and "Now we've had angel food for the soul, the inner man is clamoring for turkey."

Just then a servant who had answered the ringing phone, approached Patricia and said, "The doctor phoned to say that Elva Blake was made very happy when she heard you sing her song. She has now been X-rayed and shows an excellent chance of speedy recovery!"

"Wel-l——" said Patricia with the sigh of relief she emitted after these words, "Right here and now I go on record as saying—that I am simply ravenous!"

Mark Stafford pulled Patricia away from Greg, whose hand he had tucked within the crook of his arm, saying, "No, no, now—she's for *me*!" Good-nature glowed on his face.

They all took their places at the table and Mark Stafford proposed a toast: "To the *Queen*—if there ever *was* one!" Several voices resounded with "Hear! Hear"

* * * * * * *

Just a few days later, Tommy one day came striding into Patricia's apartment. He said with some excitement:

"I had a call today, to go to ———— Station. A special man is needed in that department, immediately, and I guess I'm it." I *have* to go—and to-night!"

He took her hands in his own, "We'll get married on my first leave, darling! It won't be too far distant!"

Relinquishing her hands once more he said brisly, "Well—get into your togs and come and see me off in two hours, will you, sweet? I'll come back for you, and call for Aunt Janet, also. You are my *folks*—you and Aunt Janet! You do want to see me off don't you?"

"Yes of course—of *course*, Tommy!" said Patricia. "But what a shocking surprise! And of course I'll get ready to go to the train with you right away. Now, is there anything I can get or do for you before you go?"

"No—no, dear," answered Tommy. "Well, I must go and pack, and so on, but I'll be back in a couple of flashes!"

At the station, to which they all drove in his Aunt Janet's limousine, Patricia and his aunt saw Tommy off, all safe and sound. There they wished him worlds' of good luck and God speed. He embraced Patricia, tenderly saying,

"We'll have a bang-up wedding on my first leave, darling."

"Fine, Tommy dear," she answered, already feeling the sadness so common when one must say good-byes to departing friends and relatives.

"Good-bye, Tommy," she finished, "And all the luck in the world!"

Tommy embraced and kissed her again, very tenderly, and then turned to his aunt.

"Good-bye, Tommy, my boy!" said she. "See you soon, I hope. Wear your rubbers when it rains, now!" She patted his shoulder affectionately.

Tommy grinned at this old-fashioned solicitude, as he hugged and kissed her, heartily, and then hurried to the train which will wait for no man, and was about to demonstrate this fact to stragglers.

They shouted more farewells and waved animatedly until the train passed from sight.

Then Aunt Janet remarked to Patricia, "We must see each other often, now. We'll need consolation, with Tommy away!"

This plan they carried out, because they were, independently of Tommy, genuinely fond of each other.

Some time later, they were in a fashionable cafe. A member of the orchestra approached their table after a murmured conversation with another and many glances toward Patricia. Then he, the orchestra leader, asked, bowing politely,

"Miss Patricia Royal, the singer, if I am not mistaken?"

"Yes, you're quite correct," answered Patricia with a smile, "Mr.—"

"Davis," he supplied. Patricia offered her hand and said:

"The lady with me is Mrs. Janet Forsythe Reeves." They both bowed, ceremoniously.

"Miss Royal—" Mr. Davis ventured, "Would you be willing to sing for us? Any selection would do. The orchestra will probably know any one you suggest, if you will?"

Patricia gave the desired answer, "Why yes! I'll be very happy to sing!"

Mr. Davis smiled his appreciation at her graciousness, as Aunt Janet interjected, "Patricia, wouldn't it be nice to sing a song suitable to Tommy's absence—her fiancee, my nephew," she explained to Mr. Davis. "For instance, 'When I'm Again With You'."

Mr. Davis said, with enthusiasm, "That selection *would* be fine, Miss Royal, if you decide upon it. The boys know it well!"

Patricia smiled agreement and said, "Yes, I like that one!" Mr. Davis took her to the mike.

At that moment, though Pat did not observe him, Greg entered by chance and was taken to a table out of Patricia's view. The crowd necessitated a table behind a potted palm.

Mr. Davis announced the honour Miss Royal was doing them by singing a beautiful song for her affianced, absent in the service. The song was a sentimental one expressing love and longing for one de-

parted from her side. As always, Patricia sang with deep feeling, interpreting the thought as it was meant to be expressed. "Clouds of grey will disappear from skies of bluest blue—on the day of your return—When I'm Again With You."

But Greg thought that the emotion came from the depths of her heart for Tommy.

He listened thoughtfully to Patricia's rendition of a lovely song and felt that it meant the death knell to a wild and lingering hope which had, in spite of all, persisted in his heart. His eyes brooded as he sat dejectedly, elbow on table and chin in cupped hand. His gloom deepened as Patricia responded to applause which would take no denial by singing, "Time rolling by, will soon have passed; close by your side I'll be—at last! Together, we'll build castles, tall—a house of dreams, which will not fall. When honey moon shines from above—forever, then—Join Me in Love." He signed to himself, "Tommy's a lucky guy!"

A few days later, Patricia arose from reading a book, and said to her Aunt Lois, "I feel the need of some fresh air and a walk, so I believe I'll post the letters."

"That's a good idea, dear," answered Aunt Lois, "Do you want me to go along?"

"No, Auntie. You could never keep up to me. I need a brisk canter," said Patricia, smiling.

As Patricia walked along at a smart pace, approaching from the opposite direction was Greg. His hands were in his pockets, and his hat was down at an "I don't care" angle. He frowned with impatience when he noticed two lovers pass, holding hands and talking in "sweetheart" voices. Seeing a stick lying on the sidewalk, he kicked it forcibly aside.

Patricia slowed her pace as she saw a red mail-box gleaming under a street light, and crossed towards it. Three people suddenly collided. One was a stranger, who uttered, "Oh—*excuse* me," He touched his hat when he looked at Patricia.

Patricia, whose hat had been knocked awry, set it straight on her head, nodded her head in acknowledgment of the stranger's apology, and then suddenly beheld Greg. She said in great surprise, "OH! Hello!"

Greg said in echoing surpise, "Well—Gosh! *Pardon me*! And—hello there!"

In great contrast to a moment ago, his face was wreathed in smiles. Pushing his hat back to a more hopeful angle, with his greeting, he looked like a different man.

Said he, "What are *you* doing out, all by yourself?"

"I might ask you the same!" said Patricia, smiling too.

"Oh-h—just wandering around in the night air to dust the cobwebs off my mind."

"I hope you succeeded, sir," answered Patricia, merrily. She went on, "And I was just posting some letters—or trying to," She laughed.

"Well—" answered Greg, "if we've both nothing better to do, let's go and dine and dance!' I know a nice place close by. It has a floor show, too. What do you say?"

"Why—that's fine. It sounds like fun! I'll phone Auntie and explain my prolonged absence."

"Then, let's get started!" exclaimed Greg. "Time is passing us by!"

Greg asked the waiter for a secluded table with a good view of the floor show. The waiter glanced at them knowingly, and said, "*I'll* find one! Yes *Sir*!"

Greg glanced at Patricia and both smiled gaily. In a minute they were comfortably seated, and looking around at their pleasant surroundings, happily.

Then Greg remarked, "To me—this all seems like a dream. I hope I won't waken. Shall we dance?"

At Patricia's pleased, "why, yes!" they did so, the while making light conversation. Greg found it very pleasant, having Patricia within his arms, and momentarily his eyes betrayed his tenderness, despite the gay and nonchalent mask he attempted to keep wearing.

Back in their chairs at the table, a few minutes later, Greg told Patricia: "It seems I'm elected for the secret service, tho' I tried my best to join up as a paratrooper."

"You did!" exclaimed Patricia. "But that's too dangerous!"

"Well," laughed Greg, "I didn't succeed." He continued, "But—I don't see that life is any merry-go-round anyway. In a service like that, you keep your mind on other things beside yourself. And—well—I just liked the idea. Besides, I thought that if I wanted to fight for my country and freedom, I might as well go all the way. But—" he shrugged, "fate decreed other activities for me!"

His speech betrayed volumes, but Patricia could only utter an expressive "Oh-h-!"

He continued, "Of course, you know that this is just between ourselves. You see—the officials were quite urgent, even insistent, you might say, that I join the secret service. I was informed that my acting ability was important. My work as an entertainer which could take me anywhere, would be a good cover-up for that of secret service. Added to that, my education and knowledge of languages makes me, according to them, indispensible to that branch. So I am placed, rightfully,

I guess, where I can be of the most use to my country. And it seems," he finished, "I must go to South America in the near future."

He grew momentarily pensive as he shook his head a little sadly. Looking into Patricia's eyes he said, "If things *only* were different, you could go with me for the six months I must be there. But—I guess that's impossible now!"

Patricia, serious also, answered, "I'm afraid it is, Greg." She paused, then went on, "But it would have been so perfect!"

"Do you really mean that?" asked Greg, looking at her closely.

"Well—yes—that is—" she faltered, "I've always wanted to see South America and—"

"Patricia! Are you quite sure you know what you're doing?" questioned Greg.

"Well—it seems so—doesn't it?" said Patricia, hesitantly. "Tommy's a fine fellow. A little vain, perhaps, but that's a small fault, after all."

"Oh, yes!" agreed Greg. "He's a real good egg. None better. And as long as you care for each other—" He did not continue, but studied her seriously.

Patricia said, animatedly, "Oh—my favourite number! Shall we dance again, Greg?"

He assumed a gay mood too. Laughing lightly they moved from the table and glided among the other dancers until approached by the cafe proprietor who asked Greg to "Sing for us—*please*!" So after escorting Pattie back to the table Greg stood before the micraphone and sang, "The long years lie between; and I must think—since yesterday—of things that might have been." The crowds, misty eyed, offered such continued applause that Greg finally rose again from Patricia's side and sang, "What can life hold for me—with you gone? Yet—I must still play a part; and with each dawn, I must go on—cheerfully—with broken heart."

* * * * * * *

Some time later, very alarming and similar telegrams were received by Mrs. Janet Forsythe Reeves (Tommy's aunt), Patricia and Paul Williams—Tommy's best friend and former co-worker. Each was worded to the effect that Thomas David Reeves had met with a serious airplane accident in the course of his training, due to very sudden storm conditions.

Each suggested that it might be advisable to come, as his condition was critical and as yet unchanged, and that he had been begging to see the recipient of each telegram.

Paul Williams received his at the drug store and he and Trudy Norwood were greatly worried and upset by the contents. Trudy grew

white and felt ill and had to go and sit down and rest her head in her arms. With panic she said, "What can I do? I must do something!"

The telegrams for Tommy's Aunt Janet and Patricia were re-directed from their homes to the theatre where Patricia was singing and Mrs. Reeves was one of the audience. Between acts the latter joined Patricia in her dressing room, almost in tears, exclaiming, "Something terrible has happened to Tommy!" She thrust the telegram to Patricia, who handed it back, saying in deeply sympathetic tones, "Yes—I got one too! I'm so worried, I don't know what to do—or think!"

Mrs. Reeves—Aunt Janet—said, excitedly, "Well there is one thing we could do! There is a plane in less than an hour. I'm going to take it! Can you go too?"

"Oh—I hope so! I *want* to! I'll call the director and talk to him!" said Patricia.

A prop. man summoned him, and in a few minutes Mr. William Keble, an efficient looking individual, wearing glasses and with greying hair, appeared. Anyone but the star performing leading-lady would have had to go to him, but to give Patricia credit, she had not thought of this.

Mr. Keble looked questioningly at Patricia after perfunctory greetings, who silently gave him her telegram, with a very troubled face. He read it, and then looked at her with thoughtful eyes.

"Well—" she faltered, "What—what do you think? Shall I—may I—"

He cleared his throat, looked at her seriously, and then said kindly but firmly, "I'm very much afraid you *cannot* leave on the next plane, Miss Royal, if that's what you are considering. The accident may not turn out to be as serious as it now appears, you know! And, aside from that, you have obligations to a houseful of people."

He stepped forward and laid his hand on her shoulder, saying, "You knew, Miss Royal, when you chose this profession, that, come what may, performances must continue—'The show must go on'—as it is usually expressed. There come times to each and every one in the theatre, when he or she must carry on in the face of great difficulties. At such times, personalities must be set aside and sacrifices must be made in spite of heartbreak."

Patricia nodded and stood silent with sad and thoughtful eyes downcast.

She looked up as Aunt Janet said, "He's right, of course, Patricia. You can do nothing else! Follow when you can—perhaps to-morrow—if possible. I'll take the plane tonight, and wire telling you how Tommy is, when I arrive!" She smiled at Mr. Keble with understanding.

When Tommy's Aunt Janet approached his bed in the station

hospital, she passed many similar rows, and smiled sympathetically at the ailing occupants. Tommy's bed was behind a screen, which Miss Brody, a pleasant-faced nurse, in her thirties, indicated.

When Aunt Janet looked in, she found that Tommy was not alone. He was swathed in bandages, and a very pretty girl was by his side. She sat gazing at him with a tortured expression and with her heart in her eyes. So troubled and intent was she, that she failed, entirely, to observe the nurse and Tommy's Aunt Janet standing nearby.

She whispered in wracked tones, "Tommy—Tommy—look at me—can't you! Open your eyes and look at me!" She put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed, almost silently.

After a minute or two, she fell to her knees and caught his hand in hers, oblivious of an audience, saying in whispered tones, "God—God—please make him well! I'll do anything—*anything*! But—make him recover!"

Aunt Janet went forward, and put her hand lightly on Tommy's head, peering at him closely. Then she turned and looked at the girl with serious, pitying, puzzled eyes.

The nurse approached Tommy's side, efficiently, and the girl arose, looking a little startled at the unexpected intrusion of others, but afterwards, she only sank, dejectedly into a nearby chair and there rested her tear-stained face in her hands.

The nurse felt Tommy's pulse, and then her eyes widened and her lips opened a trifle. Seeing the change of expression, Aunt Janet beckoned her out, asking, "How is he?"

The nurse answered with a smile, "Oh! His pulse is much stronger now, and that's the sign we were waiting for. Tho' his spine is injured, his doctor is most skilful, and had great hopes for him, once he recovered from the shock, which he has done! He's growing much stronger already! His constitution is very good, you see. I believe he will be as good as new, with proper care. Of course, it may take weeks – even months, I can't say."

"Oh—that *is good* news! I'm so relieved!" said Aunt Janet with a long sigh. She went on, "And—who is that very pretty girl who is by his side? I seem to know her face—"

"Well," answered the nurse, "When I asked her for her name, she said it was 'Trudy Norwood'. And when I questioned her as to her relationship to the patient, she only said, 'I love him'. And she seemed so desperate—so *ill*—that I allowed her to go in!"

"Trudy Norwood—" reflected Aunt Janet, "Oh-h yes! She's the girl who worked with him! She's a drug clerk. Poor, sweet girl!" she said thoughtfully, with deep, sympathetic tones, "She certainly loves him!—I guess you'd better tell her the good news, and end her agony."

"Yes!" answered the nurse, "I couldn't tell her much about his condition when she arrived. His heart was at pretty low ebb, then!"

Patricia arrived the following day but was forced to make only a flying visit. On the way to the hospital, she hurriedly stopped in, here and there, and arrived laden down with gifts.

Tommy was conscious now, and surprisingly improved, and tho' listless when Patricia entered, his eyes began to shine at the sight of her. He looked at the gifts she stacked on the table with a glance of appreciation, and said in a weak voice, "Thank you dear, but you shouldn't have bothered with those."

Patricia kissed him gently, and then said with quiet enthusiasm, "I'm *so* glad you took a turn for the better! It was impossible for me to get here last night, so your aunt wired me, and well—I lived again after I received the message." She sat by his side.

Just then, Trudy appeared at the door. She stopped suddenly, instead of continuing her approach, saying, "Oh-h—you have company. Tommy. Well—I'll—"

"Come in, Trudy," said Tommy. She came forward hesitantly. "Miss Patricia Royal," said Tommy, introducing them, "Miss Trudy Norwood".

Patricia and Trudy murmured at the same time that they were already acquainted.

"Well," said Trudy, afterward, "I'll see you another time, Tommy. You shouldn't have too many visitors."

"No, stay," said Tommy, "That's all right." But Trudy had already said "Good-bye", and disappeared out the door.

"I was surprised to see Trudy Norwood here!" remarked Patricia. "But it's nice for you to have her company, since I can't—"

"Yes," agreed Tommy. "She came all the way here, just to see me. It seems she arrived by plane, very soon after I was hurt. Isn't she a silly little thing!" He sighed and shook his head, and then went on, "Oh—I appreciate the thought, of course."

Patricia looked at him with interest, but he continued with a change of subject.

"Well—let's talk about you." He was beginning to show fatigue, in spite of himself.

"No," refused Patricia, firmly. "You'd better stop talking and rest. You look exhausted. You're still very ill, Tommy. After all—"

Tommy reached for her hand, sighing, "Do you *love* me, Patricia?"

"Of *course* I do, Tommy. Now—you get some sleep. You need all the rest you can get!"

Tommy obediently closed his eyes, then opened them for a moment to look at her, then closed them once more. When he released her hand she walked away from his side, and his own hand fell to the bedside, expressive of a certain hopelessness.

At that point, the nurse came in with tray and hypodermic needle and smilingly rolled up the sleeve of Tommy's sleeping garment, saying, "Well, this is next on the list, and will keep you comfortable." Patricia realized then why he was not in pain, but drowsy.

* * * * * * *

At home, days later, Patricia received a letter from Tommy. She had to turn it over before she recognized the writing, as it had been scrawled awkwardly from his reclining position. On the back was his name and hospital address. She murmured, "From Tommy!" She opened and read part of it silently, then uttered a surprised, "Oh!" She began to read it aloud, enunciating the words slowly, the better to assimilate their meaning.

She read, "I would hesitate forever, to tell you this, except that I realize we, Aunt Janet and I, rushed you off your feet, insisting on announcing our engagement without waiting for your considered decision, in spite of the fact that you were most uncertain of your feelings for me from the first. I want to tell you that I shall always worship you as one might adore a goddess."

"Trudy, I meet on my own plane. She loves me so greatly, and has for such a long time that, at last, I find myself returning her tender feeling. While lying ill, I felt much gratitude for her thought and care. Suddenly, this changed to something much different, and a spark has since been growing into the steady flame of love."

"Aunt Janet could see how things were going, and kept mentioning you, to keep me reminded. She was better pleased with the situation when I explained that Trudy is a registered drug clerk. Then, when I happened to mention that her father is a medical doctor and surgeon—a professional man—(I told you of her funny weakness) it was amusing and a little touching too, the way she took Trudy to her heart like a mother hen. She admitted, in discussing the subject one day, that perhaps everything was for the best, and that her hopes may have been vain, that you would grow to love me greatly enough for marriage."

"Patricia, I would not allow myself to admit before, what I have really known was a fact—that you are in love with Gregory Warren. I have seen it in your eyes when he has been present, but I hoped to replace him in your heart. A vain hope, I see now! He loves you too, Patricia—no doubt of that! He wears his heart on his sleeve for all to see, when you are near. Truth must prevail, tho' I tried for a long time to defeat it. Forgive me for wasting your time, and trying to change the course of fate. Please write to me, and express your true, inner thoughts."

When Patricia finished reading Tommy's letter, she sat in deep thought. After an interval in which she sat almost motionless, she moved to her desk and found writing paper and pen. Then she wrote, in part:

"and Tommy, you will find true happiness with one who loves you so greatly—and whom you now love in return. I could never have succeeded in making you truly happy."

"Yes, Gregory has been in my heart for a long time, as you have guessed. I hope I have found a place in his, as you believe." With a few more words, Patricia finished the letter and sealed it.

Next evening Patricia dined with friends. After dinner, because it was very fine weather, they went motoring around the outskirts of the city. Patricia returned to her apartment about eleven p.m.

Their maid said to her, "Miss Royal, Mr. Gregory Warren was trying to get in touch with you all evening. He came, for the first time, hours ago and left that recording for you." Patricia glanced over to where the record lay, which the maid indicated by pointing, as she continued, "He left a message with your aunt. Oh—here she comes now!"

"Oh Patricia," said Aunt Lois, rapidly, "Gregory Nelson has been trying to locate you. He said he must leave by plane for South America at 9:30 p.m. When he was last here, he said to tell you he regretted more than he could say, that he had not been able to see you. And to tell you, "Good-bye—with love!" Patricia's shocked eyes amazed her.

This was a tremendous jolt to Patricia. She dashed to the phone, heedless of the time, and tried to reach Greg at his home, at his club and at the home of a friend. No use, of course. Her Aunt Lois watched her with comprehending eyes, pitying her. After the last call, Patricia glanced at the clock which indicated 11:15 p.m. She realized then that Greg must be hundreds of miles away.

She walked slowly and listlessly to a chair and dropped into its depths, defeated and sad. She sat there for some time, and was thankful for her aunt's consideration, when she came to her, and after kissing her and patting her shoulder, left her to be alone.

After some time had elapsed, Patricia remembered the record Gregory had left, and when she had thoughtfully closed the doors so as not to disturb those resting, she placed the record on the turn table and started it. Then, she heard the recording of his voice, so dear to her. His very last recording! Playing one side, she heard the wistful song, "Sadly, the truth I am forced to see—another has your heart. I waken, now, to reality, to know—we're far apart!" Her eyes were brimming with tears at its completion. With a deep sigh she turned the record over and heard Greg's voice singing, ""Never Forget". The song suggested, wistfully, "Though you gave your love to another—and forgot your vows to me—Could there be a corner in your heart, left—for just a memory? Only a memory—dimly recalled—and yet—Darling, please remember me—Never Forget."

* * * * * * *

The following morning, after a night of tossing and turning in her bed, Patricia stood before a large window, dressed in a black dress, white trimmed. Her troubled thoughts made her eyes blind to the familiar and pleasant view displayed below. She could only think of the dreary months of cheerlessness in store for her.

The door-bell sounded and her already jangled nerves caused her to start. After a few moments, she turned her deeply troubled face, and was astonished to see Greg enter. He hastened over to Patricia who stood with paralyzed tenseness, watching his approach. Speechless with overjoyed amazement, she could hardly believe her eyes and ears when he said, "Darling—orders came just at plane time last night, to leave several days later. And I had to go into immediate consultation with superior officers. Perhaps the whole incident was intended for diplomatic purposes. I don't know. But, those birds higher up in the services don't care how much they fool a fellow. I would have called you up in the wee small hours of the morning when I finally was free, but I didn't flatter myself that you would be so interested in my affairs, that you wouldn't mind being aroused!"

"—Patricia—now that I don't leave for another week or more—your aunt told me about your letter from Tommy—if you *only* cared enough, everything would be perfect. We could belong to each other—one exalted dawn." At the extravagant term, his expression trembled between a grin and seriousness.

Greg then looked searchingly into Patricia's eyes for the first time since entering the room. What he saw there told him what he wanted to know more eloquently than words. He drew Patricia into his arms and kissed her with tenderness and passion, and knew the sweetness of her response. Then he exclaimed:

"How wonderful! Everything must have happened as it has by the grace of God!"

"Yes!" agreed Patricia. "Dear—I realized how very overwhelmingly I loved and needed you when I believed I had lost you."

"But I would have returned to you within six months, my silly darling!" said Greg.

"And think of all the precious, wasted time apart when we should be together!"

"We'll have just a quiet wedding!" hopefully suggested Greg.

"Well—" said Patricia, "Not too quiet! That would never suit Auntie. I'm afraid we'll have to put up with a little fuss."

* * * * * * *

After the very beautiful wedding, with great numbers of fashionably attired guests and attendants present, amid a profusion of flowers and accompanied by dignified and impressive music, the bridal bouquet was thrown.

It was caught by a flushed and excited Trudy. She then returned to Tommy's side, where he leaned on a crutch. Arm in arm, their faces shone with happiness.

A cry was raised by Elva Blake, whose face gleamed with generous soap scrubbing and excitement, for "Oh—please—just one more song before you leave us!" It was Mark Stafford's good-humoured boice which seconded the request, saying "How about that, Greg and Patricia?" Other voices, including that of Paul Williams, present with Trudy and Tommy, exclaimed that it was a "grand" and "perfect" idea. And as Patricia and Greg stood uncertainly, but with radiant faces, a very small flower girl in starched dress, and bright eyes in small, pretty face, looked up saying, "Sing for me—will you—Pattie and Greg?"

And so they sang. And as they did so, Patricia's Aunt Lois, Greg's mother and Tommy's Aunt Janet, who had somehow gravitated together, all furtively brushed tears of emotion and happiness from their eyes.

The white-robed and veiled Patricia and Gregory in formal attire, both very splendid amid their wedding setting, glanced at each other with tender, glowing eyes as they sang, gloriously,

"Kind fate decreed, that—after you had ceased to wander—you should be mine. Curtain descends on love, divine. At the Finale—You Are Mine!"

The path led parallel and close for earthly stars.

For this was their exalted dawn.

———

Seaward Deluge

Calamity had overtaken Madrice Dixon just as suddenly as had this cloudburst on the seaside. And she was a helpless victim in the tentacles of both.

To-night, when the rain started, it for a minute fell gently. Then it spattered down in business-like manner to the accompaniment of roaring thunder and terrifying flares of lightning which illumined earth and heaven. The rain then poured down in unpleasant silver sheets of water.

If only she were not dressed in this long evening dress and short fur cloak, thought Madrice, she could run part of the way along the beach in the driving rain.

Her blue eyes were wide with anxiety, and the hairdress above her even features was rapidly coming undone.

She had just started back to the place which she must of necessity, temporarily call home. It was an old, castle-like, turreted mansion, standing on a rugged promontory above the sea. At night, the winds over the ocean often whistled and howled uncannily, while old shutters banged and clattered and rafters creaked.

Well, she had walked three miles along the shore in her long white evening dress, while the weather was fine. Now, she must breast this storm—and walk three miles back.

It was a strange thing that she should be here, alone, and dressed in this fashion. But the whole situation was strange. No, the word was—grotesque!

If anyone had forcast to-night's experience to Madrice a month ago, she would have laughed heartily at such an idea. If the whole story had been predicted, her mind would have reeled trying to find suitable words to deride it. But, here she was, a victim of many sinister happenings and at this moment in a deluge of rain and wailing wind.

The great, hitherto deserted mansion, so like a castle, standing by the seaside—someone's ancestral home, no doubt—to-night, for the first time, would be a welcome retreat.

It had been rented under false pretenses, to use as a hide-out to conceal Madrice. It must have been easy for Sally, an actress past her days of glory, and with little conscience to bother her, to pose as a respectable elderly woman of means. In this guise she had rented, and thus obtained possession of the mansion on the island in the sea.

Madrice stopped to straighten the fur cloak about her shoulders. She pulled the long white gown, now soaking wet and clinging to her, away from her graceful limbs to try to make the walking easier.

She glanced at the expanse of blue-black ocean and saw that the choppy waves had become billows, ridden by white foam and spray. They rose to peaks, spread out, only to rise again, higher and higher. Madrice was not cold as yet, this summer evening, but she shivered at the sight of the rising storm.

She decided it would be better to occupy her mind with a review of unpleasant happenings, than to submerge her spirits in her present mess of trouble.

On that last night, which began her trials, Madrice remembered parking in a roadster by the wayside with Tony. After making ardent love to her, Tony tentatively confessed that he was already married, with a family of three. He said:

"But I'm afraid I married my wife for her money. You, I love for your own dear self!"

He pulled Madrice into his embrace again, and she was so numb with shock and surprise, she could neither move nor speak. Tony's voice went on and on with explanations, trying to smooth over an impossible situation. Then—like sudden death—came the flashlight picture. It had been taken by Buck and Mitch. Immediately after, occurred what they termed the "snatch". Forced from one car to another, Madrice had been kidnapped! She had been kept in a partial stupor for days while they travelled over land and sea.

What, otherwise, would have been her fate, she wondered. That very night, she had brought along a small trunk with the intention of eloping with—and as she thought—marrying Tony, in defiance of her parents' wishes. They had distrusted Tony from the start, for reasons which they could not explain to Madrice's satisfaction. She, too, could now see the rodent quality beneath Tony's smooth and sleekly handsome exterior.

In confessing, at that late date in his courtship of Madrice, that he was already married, with a family, no doubt he thought his great and irresistible charm would result in Madrice's capitulation without the trifling preliminary of a wedding. Well—the kidnappers had saved her the trouble of a struggle.

It had been quite a convenience that her small trunk had been, also, confiscated. When she beheld it, later, she had claimed the contents in no uncertain terms, saying, "The trunk and contents are mine, and I want them!"

Buck had answered, "O.K. Baby. Get the wind out of your sails! They're yours!"

Only incidental to her now, because of her cold anger towards Tony, she remembered that they had also taken an expensive rug, flashlight, and other of his belongings. Evidently they had a total lack of respect for other people's possessions. Tony, himself, they left, blackjacked, but alive, in his car. If he did not come out of it by himself, the first motorist in the morning no doubt found him. Madrice felt entirely indifferent.

Now, trudging along miserably in the pouring rain, she looked like a very wet wraith. She looked up at the wild sky. Grey and black piles of what looked like sheer chiffon, billowed about. Rags of white silk floated dismally here and there, among them.

Madrice had regrets. So many of them! She thought lovingly of her poor, worry-wracked mother and father, and fervently wished she might relieve their anxiety.

Her mind dwelt on Philip Thomas. Phil had always been so tender and kind to her. Overkind! She had not appreciated him, nor his kindness. The trouble had been, that she was too sure of his love for her. She pictured him in her mind, now shaken free of cluttering self-deceptions and frivolities. She saw a tall, fine-looking man, with clever, candid grey eyes and smooth dark hair; trustworthy and dependable.

She realized that she, Madrice, had been just a pretty, petty, spoiled child of fortune. She had always enjoyed too many luxuries, and had had too many admirers. But the latter were, she realized now, quite self-sufficient. All but Phil. Phil Thomas had proved, over and over again, that he could not live happily without her.

The tragic part of it was, that she realized thro' her present experience, that she loved Phil also, and had, beneath her artificiality, all the time. But she had been small enough to want and demand the adulation of a number of men—not the admiration and love of just one. Well—she appreciated and wanted Phil now. But—now was too late.

For they had quarreled about the fascinating Tony—the new-comer to their city—smartly groomed, with a small moustache, very handsome and well-built. Tony was possessed of so much appeal and charm for women, that she, Madrice, had not wanted nor tried to resist him. And it had brought her—a great, great, deal of less than nothing.

The kidnappers were holding her for a ransom of one hundred thousand dollars. This sum her father would only be able to obtain by ruining his business. He would have to sell most of his real estate and securities in order to obtain the ready cash.

Besides that, she knew Buck, Mitch and Sally meant to blackmail her on the strength of the flashlight picture they had obtained of her, in Tony's embrace. Otherwise, they warned her, she would be plunged into a messy divorce case. Doubtless, Tony's wife, whom, they declared, had "scads" of money, could obtain one, alright. And things would

look very black for her, Madrice. She had gone many times, to the most select and public places, displaying, for all to see, a most adoring and possessive manner.

When she had declared to Mitch and Buck, "But I didn't know he was married and had a family." Buck's mouth curled as he answered, "Don't try to give me that, Innocent! I'm not an infant in arms." Madrice reflected that others would also doubt her word.

She looked up at the sky again, and saw there a mass of dark clouds, promising nothing at all but hours of this same drenching rain. The dreary situation and matching thoughts were almost too much for human endurance. She sighed heavily and audibly.

Calming down after a few minutes, Madrice thought of Buck, the big gangster, who sat for hours in the "castle", playing checkers, rummy or poker with Mitch and Sally. She knew, from snatches of conversation, that the dream of Buck's life was to own and operate a gaming den with what he called a "swanky set-up". The patrons were not going to have much of a chance, evidently, for she heard him say, "I know a sweet little gadget that will wring the money out of the gambling suckers." And she, Madrice, was of course to provide the means, by ransom, with which to acquire and operate his evil device.

Tim, on the other hand, she gathered, was in the gem business, on the shady side. His dream was to loll in luxury, with most of his time spent at summer and winter resorts. He intended to live and dress and have his being in a manner becoming the possessor of half one hundred thousand dollars—and regular blackmail sums.

While she had not heard Sally's plans, Madrice judged that, with the money with which she would be paid off, Sally would buy plenty of flashy clothes, jewellery—and gum.

Alias Buck, Mitch and Sally. Three very honourable souls!

Interrupting Madrice's course of thought, some clamorous sea birds flew over the tempest torn waters in search of prey. They came to rest, one by one, on projecting ledges of a great, rugged rock headland which stood wetly dark and staunch, out of the stormy sea. There they rested and hopped about for a few minutes, pecking at the sparse soil and seaweeds, washed into the crevices by the rough waters, in a vain search for grubs and worms. Occasionally, they energetically shook their drenched feathers.

Suddenly they started to fight over a dead fish which had been tossed out of the waters by a huge, splashing surge of the sea. One seabird claimed it for his own, and flew away with the burden held fast in his beak. The others pursued with raucous cries.

The wild gulls somehow reminded Madrice of her kidnappers. Oh, they had been kind enough in their rough way. As Mitch once said to

Madrice, "You don't need to be scared, Sister. You're a pretty precious handful and well worth keeping healthy!"

Miserably, Madrice sat down for a few minutes, and looked over the great waste of rocks and water, seemingly without end. The wind on the sea made howling sounds which rose to piercing eerie shrieks above the deafening roar of the stormy waves, while lightning illumined the scene and thunder roared intermittently. It was almost unearthly. Endurance has its limits and to rest was a necessity, but she must go on thro' the driving rain.

How much, much better off she would be with a short dress on. But, Mitch, with his love of luxury, insisted upon Madrice dining dressed each evening. He was then exaggeratedly polite to her, and called her "Duchess Dixon" and "Princess Madrice".

She believed that Mitch's driving urge to obtain wealth by fair means or foul, sprang from a youth of great poverty. She thought that this had had the effect of instilling within him an exaggerated and distorted view of the value of money, for what it could obtain.

Mitch brought luxury foods every week, and they often served champagne with their sumptuous repasts which were efficiently prepared by Sally. No doubt Mitch provided for their many delicacies out of the seven hundred dollars she, Madrice, had in her purse when she was kidnapped and of which she had been relieved.

Each evening, after dinner, while Buck, Mitch and Sally enjoyed a game of checkers, rummy or poker, they did not object to Madrice walking along the sea beach, but forbade her to walk farther than a certain tree, one mile away. Buck said, as he glanced at Mitch, "Anyway, Her Majesty can't get far in that long 'night gown thing' you want her to wear in the evening."

Sally remarked, "For shackles, it's pretty becoming."

Mitch said then, "She can't go far in it, and if she does, the natives don't know our language."

They laughed, amused and pleased with their successful schemes. Madrice bit her lip.

To-night, Madrice had felt irritable besides being depressed. Her forced exile from friends and relatives was beginning to work havoc with her nervous system. Defiantly she had walked and walked and kept on walking until she had gone three miles. So, here she was, walking the three miles back in a most inconvenient, long white evening gown. Formerly charming, it was now a soaked, bedraggled, clinging part of herself. The little comfort the short fur jacket afforded her was hardly appreciated. While it served to keep her shoulders partly dry, it now resembled her little Cocker Spaniel after a swim. The small

jewelled tiarra Mitch insisted she wear to be entirely in costume, still clung but was askew in her hair. The latter, ordinarily light brown, looked dark from saturation. Since she had lost all hair pins, it now hung in long witch-like strands, and trailed down her back and shoulders. Other short wisps curled about her streaming face, white from the prolonged soaking.

Desperately, Madrice strove to detour her thoughts from her present misery. She thought again of Phil. She remembered that he had once told her that his devotion to her was so entire, that he felt it would result in his knowing when she was in any great difficulty. He vowed that at such a time, he would be on hand to help her. Hmph! He was far enough away! His declaration was a sentimental mockery and delusion.

After their last quarrel about Tony, Madrice had answered Phil's questions and warnings with, "Well, yes, I think I *do* love Tony! What objections can you think up, now?"

Shortly after, Phil had suddenly decided to take a post in the services in South America when he could have held the same position at home. She knew quite well civil engineers were needed, urgently, at all times.

And—well—she had not answered either of his letters. It had just been due to carelessness, of course, but no more letters from Phil arrived.

Deep in a morass of regrets, Madrice suddenly stumbled over a rock, sunk deep in the sand and pebbles and covered with slippery mud. She went down with a gasp and a sob, scraping her shin bone. Dishevelled, soaked, muddy and miserable, she was thankful when she gained her feet once more that, at least, she had not twisted her ankle. But—one heel had come off her pumps. Madrice looked around for it, found and picked it up, then tossed it away among some rocks. The little burden was too much to bother with and add to the trials she was already bearing. She started awkwardly limping along the streaming seaside.

Madrice wondered, suddenly, why no one was on her trail. She had been gone a long time, in this rain soaked section of the world. And after all, as her kidnappers said, she was "precious baggage". It was a wonder that their avarice had not resulted in their braving the storm to ferret out her whereabouts.

Oh, dear, she must be a long, long way from her own, sweet loved home! How she longed to see her beloved family and friends. But she had travelled days with her captors and had even crossed the salt sea to this island—somewhere!

Madrice leaned down to take some gravel out of her shoes which were hurting her feet. One by one, she shook them and knocked each against a flat stone. As she stood up again, rain gushed down her hitherto

dry back. Well—that was all that was needed to supplement the misery she had thought complete, before. From now on, no hardship would be too great for her to endure. She had been tested and could stand anything. Limpingly, she moved on.

At least, she could not be a very great distance from the "castle". "A man's home is his castle", but is a prisoner's castle her home? Surprisingly, to-night, the answer was "yes". Her prison would seem like a cozy and secure refuge. Now, even tho' it had grown dusk, she could see it, with welcome yellow lights gleaming from windows. In the distance, the "castle" stood, proud and firm on the rocky cliff above the storm-rocked sea.

Madrice sat down, with a great sigh, on a large stone, shiny-grey in the rain. She had to rest again, even tho' the rain still gushed in torrents and lightning flashed to the accompaniment of terrifying thunder-claps. The sky above looked like a dark menacing ocean, itself!

Madrice looked with eyes which showed no appreciation, at the grandeur of the sea. It was a wildly beautiful scene of leaping blue, with continually changing white plumes of foam and spray. The huge swells frothed against the great masses of dark rocks, ruggedly and unrelentingly standing firm against the vicious assaults of the waters of the sea, which often leapt clear over them, and cascaded down the other side.

The stormy sea began to menace the land, and Madrice found the water running over her ankles as she sat, limply and soggily wet upon the boulder. She was forced to arise with all speed and hurriedly limp on her way.

Steadily, she trudged on, till her white dress caught on a jagged rock. In extricating it, she left there a great swathe of its material, being too weary to struggle with its removal. A long piece of her hem dragged on the sand and gravel as she started limping towards her destination once more.

On and on she went, until at last she approached the great turreted mansion, so like a castle. She tripped on her long white dress as she slowly climbed the rough stone steps. She saved herself from a bad fall with her hands. As she arose, she brushed back the wet strands of hair which had fallen and adhered to her soaked face. Mud from the steps made black streaks across her cheek. The rain washed them into a big, dark smudge.

The door stood slightly open. Thro' it she heard raised voices. She said to herself crossly and wearily, "An argument!"

She entered the old-fashioned, ornately furnished reception hall. A red glow and flame from a log in the fire-place immediately caught her eye.

Then Madrice turned and gazed into the scowling face of Mitch, who made no remark. Sally's face looked pinched and white, and her long and gaudy ear-rings clinked as she turned her face toward Madrice. A glint of red, reflected from the fire, drew her eyes to their wrists, and she saw with great surprise that both wore handcuffs. Speechlessly, her roving eyes were caught and held by the sight of Buck, who lay sprawled in an unnatural position on the carved couch. His gun was in his right hand, and blood was spreading on the breast of the shirt covering his motionless form.

Immediately, she saw a policeman, who answered her stare with, "I had to plug him, ma'am, or he would have got me! When you're dry and a little rested, Wilson, here, will want to ask you some questions." He indicated a cigar chewing plain clothes man.

Wilson said, "How-do, Miss. We'll get the low-down later. Better change into dry things, now. Don't you think she should, Thomas?"

Forgetting her fatigue, Madrice wheeled about and looked straight into the eyes of Phil Thomas. He took her hands in his and said, unsteadily, his eyes showing strain, "They told me you weren't here at all! But I found your trunk and clothes. I was beginning to think the worst had happened to you! Where have you been, dear?"

"I went for a walk," said Madrice.

"Well! I won't ask you if you enjoyed it!" exclaimed Phil.

"But how did *you* get here?" questioned Madrice, in extreme bewilderment. "I thought you were in South America!"

"I was," answered Phil. "But I couldn't stay! I was always ill at ease. I had *you* on my mind. I had to go where you were. In spite of everything, I felt you needed me. A good opportunity offered, so I just packed—and came back. Thank God, I came when I did! I was able to help!"

Wilson offered, "It was Thomas who picked up the trail, Miss. He kept us awake nights following all clues."

The policeman said, "That's right, Ma'am—he did!" He nodded emphatically.

As Madrice looked again at Phil, he dropped her hands and gathered her into his embrace. She clung to him for a minute, then quickly drew away, saying:

"Oh, Phil—you'll get all wet! And I look *such* a mess!"

Phil only held her more closely, saying: "You never, never looked so beautiful, dear!"

Madrice glanced upward, out of the window. She saw that the deep grey skies had become dusk blue. Bright stars of heaven were alight.

The seaward deluge was ended.

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